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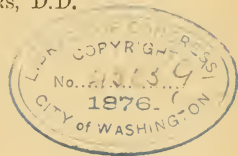
OR,

SHADOW OF DEATH.

BY THE REV. T. A. S. ADAMS, A.M.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY R. A. YOUNG, D.D.

EDITED BY THOMAS O. SUMMERS, D.D.



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PREFACE.

IN the Golden Age of Poets there were rich and noble patrons to whom the authors dedicated their verses. This practice no doubt arose from the scarcity of noble souls in those days, rather than from the existence of a race now defunct. There are so many rich and noble men nowadays that it would seem invidiously partial to dedicate a volume to any one man. The Author therefore humbly subscribes himself, to every one who buys the book,

YOUR MOST OBEDIENT SERVANT.



INTRODUCTION.

AS the author of "Enscotidion" is destined to take a high rank among the poets of America, it is thought best to introduce him with a biographical sketch. T. A. S. ADAMS is one of the country-people—a native of the South. He was born on the 5th day of February, 1839, within five miles of Macon, Mississippi, but never saw the town until he was fourteen years of age, and was never out of his native county until he was grown. His father was a devoted Methodist, fond of reading, and trained his children to talk with him, by the hour, concerning the books studied and the authors read. So the young poet learned, after awhile, from geographies, histories, travels, voyages, and other reliable sources, that there was a great world outside of the Mississippi plantation. He was not opposed to "sprouting," as the farmers style it, but preferred digging Greek roots, and, fortunately, was allowed to have his own way. The school-master was in the neighborhood, and the studies were cheerfully and rapidly prosecuted.

General Barksdale was then in the United States Congress, and secured for young ADAMS a cadetship at West Point. This was to him a source of unspeakable joy; for he had already exhibited a fondness for the drill and a passion for military glory. But about three months before the time set for his departure to the Military Academy he

was most powerfully awakened to a religious life, and felt the call to preach the gospel. It was unmistakable and unconditional. He "was not unmindful of the heavenly vision," and never went to West Point. At the age of eighteen, a student for the Christian ministry, he was admitted to the sophomore class of the University of Mississippi. Here he remained two years. He afterward went to Emory and Henry College, Virginia, where he graduated June 6, 1860.

Since that time Mr. ADAMS has been variously employed: fighting in the Confederate army, and farming at home; traveling about over the United States; conducting literary institutions of every grade, from the old-field school to the chartered college; reading most of the Greek, Latin, French, German, Spanish, and Italian books that came in his way; learning to *speak* the modern languages fluently; writing sermons, poems, and miscellanies; and preaching all around in Mississippi, Alabama, Illinois, Virginia. For several years Mr. ADAMS has been a member of the North Mississippi Conference. He is at this time pastor of the Church in Kosciusko. The presses at the Publishing House, in Nashville, are awaiting four other volumes from his prolific pen.

The reader will not be surprised at this announcement when he learns that Mr. ADAMS began to make rhymes at nine years of age, and wrote "The Hoe," "The Spade," "The Plow," "The Ax," "The Harrow," while handling those implements on the farm. At college he was called "Poet, Orator, and Divine." Since then he has published occasional pieces of such exquisite pathos and beauty, and written and preached sermons of such rare excellence and power, that the name has gracefully settled down upon him.

"Enscotidion" is an epic poem—subject, the Infernal Regions—divided into five cantos. It is in the Spenserian stanza, except four or five lyrics introduced in Cantos First, Second, Third, and Fourth. The plot: *Azan*, a young man of pious and wealthy parents, pursues a most dissolute course until they die of grief. On the anniversary of his father's funeral he holds a most disgraceful festival. Near day-break, when all the bacchantes are gone, he lies down to sleep, but is seized by goblins, and borne away to hell. *Azan* at length awakes to consciousness—it has been but a horrid dream. He reforms, and lives a holy life.

Those who have read Dante, or Milton, or Pollok, or Bickersteth, need not infer that the machinery, or scenery, is similar to theirs. The conception of "Enscotidion" is original with the Rev. T. A. S. ADAMS.

R. A. YOUNG.

NASHVILLE, TENN., April 1, 1876.



ENSCOTIDION;

Or, Shadow of Death.

CANTO FIRST.

I.

MUSE of the heavenly strain and stainless wing;
May I invoke thee? Would a seraph lay
Aside the golden harp, and cease to sing
The anthems of the shining court of day,
And on a lonely mission speed away
To catch the discord of a world of night?
Thou sportest where the yellow sunbeams play
Wanton with human hopes and fancies bright, [light.
Till e'en the blackest clouds swarm with the hosts of

II.

There, with such beauties ever wont to dwell,
Thou weavest harp-strings of their golden hair.
Stoop, heavenly muse, upon us, and beguile
The woe of some unfriended child of care;
Or wilt thou never quit celestial air?
Fair daughter of those happy realms, in vain
Eyes from the prison windows of despair
Their tearful, woe-beclouded vision strain [chain.
To catch the sight of thee, who com'st to break their

III.

If, then, to thee, through scenes of woe and night,
 The privilege to rove at will be given,
 Descend with me to Erebus, and light
 Its darkness for awhile with beams from heaven.
 Upon the ear of hopeless spirits even
 Let fall some note of heavenly harmony,
 By which the howling furies may be driven
 Awhile to deeper shades; and hell may be
 A land not tumult all, while occupied by thee.

IV.

But if, in shadows deep enveloped, still
 This God-forsaken land must ever groan—
 If o'er this gulf no angel pinion will
 Essay to pass—may mortal dare alone
 To grope amid the darkness of th' unknown?
 May I, then, unattended seek the shades?
 Shall I, so unacquainted with my own,
 Explore a world where none but spirit treads,
 Chasing a *fatus* light o'er its dark everglades?

V.

Ye restless demons, that are doomed to stay
 The denizens of darkness evermore,
 May I invoke you, and attune my lay
 To sounds more horrid than the angry roar
 Of clashing islands off the Thracian shore?
 May I with you infernal lightnings dare,
 And o'er obstructions, never passed before,
 Successful toil, and reach a region where
 The unfrequented isles the golden fleeces bear?

VI.

Then teach me what is dead, or left of life—
 What spirits still of Time are wont to borrow;
 What Time of them, that makes the past so rife
 With all the saddening souvenirs of sorrow;
 Why Hope is ever shouting, "Welcome, morrow!"
 Why Care is ever sighing, "Woe the day!"
 And writing, every eve, a deeper furrow
 Of anguish on the cheek, as if to say,
 "Fool! rich alone in Hope's fair promises to pay!"

VII.

Time was—ah! who can think what was, that now
 On ghostly wing eludes the fond pursuit,
 Nor heave a sigh that withered long ago
 Are leaves, and blossoms, and expected fruit,
 That promised joy; but shallow grew the root;
 And the tree, barren, leafless, sapless, old,
 And rotten, sent not forth a tender shoot
 To strengthen and protect it from the cold.
 How sorrowful the story, though so often told!

VIII.

Time was when in a quiet valley dwelt,
 Where Nature spread her robe of richest green,
 A father, mother, and a son, who knelt
 Each morn and eve before the great Unseen—
 Each morn acknowledged that their lives had been
 The special object of angelic care—
 And when the moon came out in silver sheen,
 Or starlight twinkled through the evening air,
 Rededicated all to God in humble prayer.

IX.

The vale was one where the beholder's eyes
Meet beauty wedded to sublimity;
The mountains reared their summits to the skies,
Kissing the storm-clouds as they thundered by;
Down rugged cliffs bright waters leaped, and, high
Above, the vapors caught the radiant bow—
God's pledge of love, when o'er a wrathful sky
He stretched the glorious arch, and bade him go
Hopefully looking up, though all be dark below.

X.

Sweet were the songs that echoed from the bowers,
Mingling with cataract roar and brooklet's chime,
Whose waters oft were parted in bright showers
Of spray against the rocks grown hoar with time.
Here grew the modest violet, there sublime
The oak that had beheld its glories fall
Five hundred times, to brave a wintry clime;
The great seemed bowing gently to the small,
Thus paying tribute to its great Original.

• XI.

Here smiled the cliffs upon the plain beneath,
Enamored of the village nestled there.
In spring-time Flora wove her richest wreath,
And hung it on the mountain's brow to wear.
Summer and autumn fruits and harvests rare
In rich profusion filled the farmer's store.
When winter's wind turned gray the old year's hair,
The happy ones within the hall the more
Exultant laughed to hear the brawler at the door.

XII.

No war had ever visited this vale—

No soldier, laurel-crowned, or red with gore,
Had ever turned the timid maiden pale

With horror as he strode before the door;

No pageant, heralded by cannon roar—

No butcher, great upon his chariot throne—

No heaps of spoils, nor captives grieving sore
O'er home and freedom sweet forever gone,
And clanking chains to break the bravest spirit down.

XIII.

But as the serpent entered Eden, so

Came wealth, and pleasure, and the love of fame.

Wealth led its train of vanity and show,

And hollow pomp assumed religion's name.

Where Modesty was wont to blush with shame
Stood Impudence, and leered on bastard Wit,

Who called her mother; and where once the flame
Of love burned incense to the Infinite,
Strange fires abominable sacrifices lit.

XIV.

Short was the work to mar the peaceful scene:

The revel took the place of harmless plays;

And Hate the foeman's dagger drew between

The most devoted friends of former days.

The youth corrupted left the pious ways
In which their fathers trod; the ribald jest,

Or tale of love, or Envy's poisoned praise,

Usurped the throne of Virtue at the feast;
And furies took the place of angels o'er man's rest.

XV.

Azan, the son of prayers and promises,
 And heir to all his father's virtuous fame,
 Forsook the path of truth and holiness,
 To tread the crooked paths of sin and shame.
 (How easy 'tis to blot the fairest name!)
 Mad Passion broke from Wisdom's mild control;
 The docile child the Bacchanal became,
 And from the sparkling poison of the bowl
 Crept out a brood of demons to destroy the soul.

XVI.

His father's house stood in the quiet dell,
 Near where the happy little village lay;
 Above it cliffs—steep, inaccessible—
 Rose up to catch the first gray tints of day,
 Or the red hues of its departing ray.
 There, too, the moon vouchsafed her milder light
 To fairies as they danced, or far away
 Vanished among the shadows of the night,
 Or hid amid the crags of that untrodden height.

XVII.

Bordered with richest green, a crystal lake
 Caught the wild brooks that from the mountain came,
 Laughing and noisy, free and wide awake.
 How soon the boisterous company grew tame,
 And changed their conduct as they changed their
 name!
 Here for awhile they slept, then on again
 But calmly moved, forgot the brooklet's game,
 And as a river, grandly through the plain, [main.
 With deepening, widening flood, sought the unbounded

XVIII.

From the high windows of this ancient dome
 One might look down to crystal depths below,
 And watch the lake's inhabitants at home
 Glide over pebbly bottoms, all aglow
 With sunlit gems; or, waving to and fro
 In gentle winds, long vines and leafy bowers
 Kissing the waves, as if to let them know
 The morning dews, that dripp'd from them in showers,
 Were not forgotten thro' the long day's lagging hours.

XIX.

None knew the builder of this mansion—none
 Remembered any one that ever knew.
 Tradition said that, in the ages gone,
 The *genii* led a virtuous couple, who
 To all their good convictions had been true,
 To this delightful spot, and built this dome;
 And promised, while their children should pursue
 The path of virtue, time should never come [roam.
 When they should sigh thro' grief, or from this valley

XX.

But if, in revelry or wanton ease,
 The children dared the high behest despise,
 No art the heavenly guardians could appease—
 No skill elude their ever-watchful eyes.
 The sun of happiness would set to rise
 No more; no more would friendly spirits bend
 Above; indignant they would seek the skies,
 And never to the offender's prayer attend,
 Or comfort, counsel, mercy, or assistance lend.

XXI.

But Azan spurned these time-worn prophecies,
His father's counsels, and his mother's tears:
Vain were the warnings of the friendly skies,
To call to virtue or arouse his fears.
Hoary, but not with weight of many years,
But sorrowing, both to early graves went down.
And yet, in spite of these remembrancers,
In reckless folly rushed the graceless son,
Heedless alike of Heaven's smile and of its frown.

XXII.

There, where we might expect, at least, to find
A show of sorrow when the funeral train
Have homeward gone, and left a grave behind—
The home of one who ne'er shall come again—
Doth not one mourner by the grave remain?
Not one! The shadows of the twilight creep
Like stealthy spirits o'er the silent plain—
The stars from heaven's unfathomed bosom peep,
But not upon a mourner who remains to weep.

XXIII.

Perhaps too heavy was the load of woe
To be paraded to a gaping crowd:
Into an inner chamber let us go,
And see him in his deep affliction bowed.
But hark! as we approach, what laughter loud
Rings thro' those halls, where sobs we thought to hear?
'Tis Azan with the wanton and the proud,
Who drink to one another merry cheer,
And with the ribald jest dry up the mourner's tear.

XXIV.

And now the night is gone—the sunlight pours
 Its golden rays along the quiet lake: we go
 And gently tap upon the ancient doors,
 And speak a word of sympathetic woe.
 But ah! no shame and sorrow does he know;
 Besotted, in a wanton's arms he sleeps;
 None o'er his shame a covering may throw;
 Light shuns the room where hell its prisoner keeps,
 While Virtue, blushing, turns away and vainly weeps.

XXV.

Thus daily, nightly, through the passing year,
 Did Azan hasten to the fatal brink.
 No word of sober counsel would he hear,
 But deeper of the fatal cup did drink;
 Less of its consequences seemed to think,
 Or care; more wildly sought debasing play;
 And where the lewdest backward oft would shrink,
 Forward he rushed, and bore the palm away—
 Sad prominence in sin, whose hero dies its prey!

XXVI.

At last his father's funeral-day returned—
 A day of wilder revels than the rest—
 A day when every passion rose and burned
 With double fury in the villain's breast.
 All day was given to the game and feast,
 And night repeated all its former shame;
 And on its sable curtains furies pressed,
 To keep their promise, and their right to claim [name.
 The wretch, who, scorning truth, had stained his father's

XXVII.

Night now was nearly past—the guests were gone;

Gray streaks along the east—the balmy air

Blew in the hall where Azan sat alone.

They dallied gently with his waving hair,

And kissed away the noxious odors there.

Strange thoughts of life rose in his mind: he threw

Away the wreath he wore, no longer fair,

And cursed the giver, and his Maker, too;

Then slowly, sullenly, within his room withdrew.

XXVIII.

He threw himself upon his couch—away

To childhood's happy days his musings led;

Then Memory spoke: "A year ago to-day!

A year ago to-day! Tradition said

A curse to-night would fall upon my head.

The night is waning; not a single sprite

Has yet appeared to haunt me on my bed.

Have they forgotten to return to-night?

Or did our revelry the timid nothings fright?

XXIX.

"Lo, here I lay me down to sleep! the prayer

Thou taught'st me, mother, was but mummary

And childish babble to the empty air.

Where are the angels watching over me—

That bright, innumerable company?

Lo, here I lay me down!—'t is I that sleep—

No ghosts, no saints, no angels here I see.

I ask no aid or guardianship to keep

The goblins from my bed, or chase them to the deep

XXX.

“Fond mother, how I loved thee! but I knew
 Thee weak, and many a moonlit meadow spread,
 To thy deranged, imaginative view,
 A host of flimsy phantoms from the dead.
 Then have I seen thee shrink with nervous dread
 To hear a rustling bough or falling leaf;
 And I have o’er those moonlit meadows sped,
 To all thy earnest admonitions deaf,
 To prove how false thy fears, how foolish thy belief.

XXXI.

“Wert thou a deathless spirit, now, I know
 Thou would’st be here to whisper in my ear,
 ‘Sleep, my dear child!’ then stoop and kiss my brow,
 And on my closing eyelid drop a tear.
 O mother, how I wish thou could’st be here!
 I long in thy embrace to lie again.
 But gone forever, though so dear—so dear!
 A wretch, I lay me down to sleep, yet fain
 Must call a mother’s spirit back—and call in vain.”

XXXII.

“Sleep, curst of Heaven!” a spirit whispered near;
 And strangely were his eyes constrained to close.
 “Sleep, O lost son!” Then fell a burning tear
 Upon his face; a spirit wail arose—
 Wild, hopeless, tender—Love’s expiring throes.
 A ghostly hand filled up the cup of wine,
 And poured it out, repeating direst woes;
 Then marked upon his brow a mystic sign, [be thine!”
 And all sang, “Wretch, sleep on! sleep’s wildest dreams

XXXIII.

He slept; the morning breezes swayed the bowers,
 And filled the chamber with their odors rare.
 High rose the sun, and rapidly the hours
 Sped in their onward course, through midday air,
 Fast to the crimson-tinted limits, where
 The day-king lingers, bidding earth farewell;
 To throw their kisses back, they tarried there,
 While tears through twilight's deepening shadows fell
 On Azan's form, cold, motionless, insensible.

XXXIV.

There was no beating of the heart; the eye
 Had lost its luster; tightly clenched the hand;
 The pale lips hung apart—no breath, no sigh—
 The soul had parted for the spirit-land—
 Who might not say forever? In the grand
 Futurity, perhaps, the word *forever*
 The spirits do not use, nor understand
 As mortals do: beyond the shadowy river
 Our language we may use, but we can need it never.

XXXV.

Now, bidden guests began to seek the hall
 For revelry again; the young and gay
 Strolled up the walks and at the door did call,
 And wondered why the host should thus delay
 To greet his company; yet there he lay,
 And would not rise to give them welcome. "Ho!"
 They shouted loud. "What! slept thro' all the day,
 And sleeping yet?" Then rose a note of woe:
 "Our friend is dead! how sudden fell the fatal blow!"

XXXVI.

They watch beside the dead! Some sing and pray;
 Some talk about the virtues, and forget
 To blame the follies, of the dead; some pay,
 In compliments, a long-neglected debt,
 And never sigh that it is owing yet;
 Some wonder why mysterious Providence
 Should call him off so soon; and some regret,
 At heart, he was not sooner hurried hence—
 While many murmur at the funeral expense.

XXXVII.

How few the awful issues realize!
 Though many talk as if they felt the weight.
 Man lives and feeds on fictions; when he dies,
 We close the book with one tenfold as great.
 Our own imaginings we contemplate
 As if realities, and round the sable pall
 We twine the beauties of the blest estate,
 And let our tears upon the coffin fall;
 Then turn and soon forget he ever lived at all.

XXXVIII.

To others monuments we build: the world
 Claims many a carcass that in life it spurned;
 He who has seen the lip so often curled
 In scorn through life, has, when by death inurned,
 Long trains of pilgrims to his ashes turned.
 A thousand generations dead in vain!
 Man has not yet the simple lesson learned
 That virtue in the living is the rain
 Upon the field—the other, dew-drops in the main.

XXXIX.

Why close the wound of death? why keep it sore?
 A few short years, and it is all the same
 Whether of friends the dead has few or more,
 To share his honor or support his shame.
 Death often robs the censor, and his blame
 Melts into pity: dull Oblivion's sea
 Is filled with tears that oft wash out the name
 Of one unwhipped for crime. No charity
 Hides half so many faults as hide, O Death, in thee!

XL.

How many a friend is there who, bending o'er
 The last remains of one whose watch he keeps,
 Talks of the foibles which he kindly bore
 From the poor clay that now before him sleeps!
 Yet o'er his corse he most sincerely weeps;
 Forgets dead follies, and must fain forgive
 What Death with his remorseless sickle reaps.
 How good that differences ne'er outlive
 A friend! The grave annuls Censure's prerogative.

XLI.

And then we turn, nor kinship longer hold
 With what we cannot censure; friendship was
 Strong as our frailty—now it is as cold.
 Our only commentary is, "Alas!
 Thus do our friendships and our frailties pass
 Into the shades together—joy and care
 A checkered picture throw upon the glass,
 Which in our friendship is exceeding fair; [there."
 While Death rubs out the spots, and leaves no picture

XLII.

But Azan—is he sleeping while we stay
 To moralize? The tale told o'er his bier
 To cheat the night, or coax the laggard day
 To shorten what we do not wish to hear,
 Has very little relevancy where
 No hero is. O'er regions dark and wild
 He wanders, careless of the tale or tear;
 By them no weary moment is beguiled,
 Nor consolation given to Sorrow's sighing child.

XLIII.

'Twas midnight—midnight deep on vale and hill—
 The watchers fell asleep within the room;
 Without were heard the owl and whippoorwill,
 Chanting their anthems to the silent gloom;
 Within, the corpse was straightened for the tomb;
 While in the lamp-light airy spirits stole—
 Some wild and horrible in mien, and some
 Of wondrous beauty, as of happy soul
 Reclaimed from woe and sin, and tyrant Fear's control.

XLIV.

Around the body circling, now, they drew
 Their wings across his cold and pallid face;
 Then, turning lightly, from the window flew,
 And o'er the lake gave one another chase.
 Nor ended there the spirits' eager race:
 O'er cliff and mountain swift as thought they sped—
 Restless, though weary—ne'er to find a place
 By calm, contented soul inhabited,
 Which mortals idly call the City of the Dead.

XLV.

Then back they came: dim grew the chamber lights—
 Damp, stifling air pervaded all the room—
 Upon the wall appeared infernal sights,
 Which added horror to the awful gloom.
 Black drops of blood exuded from a bloom
 Of myrtle which was laid on Azan's breast,
 Who, waking as a specter from the tomb,
 Looked round upon the company by sleep oppressed,
 And thus the shadowy forms within the room addressed:

XLVI.

"Mortals, or spirits! if in either land
 By man or demons tenanted I be—
 If by the blasts of hell I now be fanned,
 Or lie upon the margin of that sea
 Which mortals dread, and call Eternity—
 O tell me, is there naught but shadows here?
 Is there no guide, no company, for me?
 Left in a dungeon, will no friend appear
 The solitude with but one hopeful word to cheer?"

XLVII.

"Is this the vale? Is yonder silent stream
 The river of the dead? Are yonder skies
 The canopy of hades? Do I dream?
 I seem to see the walls infernal rise,
 And horrid visions pass before my eyes.
 O Death, is this thy inky river's shore?
 Is yonder ghost thy boatman now that plies
 Across the waters dark his muffled oar?
 And is that murmur not their sullen, ceaseless roar?"

XLVIII.

As thus he spoke, a giant figure strode
 With noiseless step before him; stooping o'er
 With piercing gaze, he for a moment stood,
 Then vanished into shades of night before
 One word was uttered; through the open door
 A sougling breeze along the passage swept,
 And faded leaves and withered flowers bore
 Upon its breath. Again the stupor crept
 O'er Azan's senses, and he closed his eyes and slept.

XLIX.

On sped the car of night; down went the stars,
 While others mounted on their shining way;
 Titan was letting down his stable-bars,
 And harnessing the fiery steeds of day,
 That stamped impatient of the long delay.
 A deeper sleep was on the watchers' eyes,
 And heavier was their breathing; and as they
 Slept on unconscious, Azan, in surprise,
 Awoke to see the form again before him rise.

L.

The giant's head was hoary, thin his hair;
 Deep furrows were upon his brow; his cheek
 Was changeable—now plump and fair,
 And now all pale and hollow; short and weak
 His breath—too short to let him calmly speak;
 His bony fingers trembled as with age;
 And yet the light of majesty would break
 Through all the veils. One saw in him the sage
 Whose mind the weighty matters of a world engage.

LI.

There was a world of beauty in his eye,
 As well as seas of tears. A wreath of light
 Hung round his head—a brilliant galaxy
 Of stars shone o'er him in the blackest night;
 Yet oft he strangely faded out of sight,
 Or on the eye a double figure made—
 One pale and sorrowful, the other bright.
 The bright one ever was the first to fade,
 And then the pale one grew more haggard and decayed.

LII.

Flowers bloomed and withered, and the young grew old,
 While from the dead young life again arose;
 The vigorous faltered, and the weak grew bold;
 Sworn friends became the bitterest of foes,
 And foes forgot each other to oppose,
 Where this magician passed—though all denied
 The magic his. Secrets he would disclose,
 And many an open truth was known to hide, [defied.
 And took those strongholds first which most his skill

LIII.

Men called on him for help in their distress;
 And ere their prayer was ended, he was nigh
 To raise them from their utter helplessness
 To posts of honor or security.
 When he had set the beggar up on high,
 He only claimed his gratitude, and laid
 The bill of service on the memory,
 And journeyed onward; for he never stayed
 One moment to be sure if e'er the debt was paid.

LIV.

He was forbearing, vengeful, mocking, kind;
 Wasteful, yet niggard to the last degree;
 Suspicious, trusting; now completely blind,
 And now appearing every thing to see.
 A never-tiring laborer was he,
 But all his work he hasted to undo;
 His task forever seemed about to be
 Completed, but it ever larger grew;
 Since what had long been done he oft began anew.

LV.

He ne'er was still a moment: round and round
 At times he turned, till dizzy grew the head;
 Now stepping back and forth, or, at a bound,
 Beyond the reach, beyond the sight, he sped.
 And now he nervously approached the bed
 Where Azan lay in such a wretched state,
 And stooping down and touching him, he said,
 "What wilt thou, mortal, calling me so late,
 Who oftentimes have come, a beggar, to thy gate?"

LVI.

"What wilt thou?" Azan started at the voice—
 'T was like his father's, though so rough the tone.
 The question wakened memories and joys
 Of days of innocence forever gone.
 Had Conscience spoken of his duty done,
 The voice had been as music to the ear;
 But to the reckless and ungrateful son
 'T was muttering thunder, boding wrath severe,
 And Conscience woke to see the dread Avenger near.

LVII.

The father's bones had but that day been brought
 And placed within a niche cut in the wall;
 But little of their presence Azan thought
 While he held riot in the ancient hall.
 But now, as he beheld the specter tall
 Before him standing, terrified he turned
 His eye upon the coffin—it was all
 Disfigured by decay, and he had learned
 No lesson from the dead whom he in life had spurned.

LVIII.

The giant drew the coffin from the wall,
 And laid it on a marble slab near by;
 Then one by one the bones took out, till all
 Were out; the giant gnawed them greedily,
 Oft starting up, as if a foe to fly;
 Then, turning, ate again; then stole away
 On noiseless step, and then again drew nigh
 The table where the bones half-eaten lay, [stay.
 And gazed as one who wished, although unasked, to

LIX.

The dust upon the table gathered fast,
 And o'er the floor the bones in fragments fell;
 The tapers, flickering in their sockets, cast
 O'er all the scene a melancholy spell;
 Yet still the lone, impatient sentinel
 Trod on the dust that fell upon the floor,
 Leaving a foot-print there. Then rang a knell,
 Slowly and solemnly; and from the door [more!"
 The specter passed, and, turning, simply said, "No

LX.

“No more!” repeated Azan, left alone,
 “Thou shadowy anthropophagus, for thee,
 Who hast not of my father left a bone,
 To tell that e’er there lived such man as he!
 And thus these bones of mine are soon to be
 The food of this wild maniac, who has fled
 Away from life and its activity,
 Its hopes and fears, to feed upon the dead;
 Then let it be no more—let him be left unfed.

LXI.

“Alas, ye dead! there is no more of you,
 Except these hollow walls of coffins built.
 Life runs its course as false and hollow, too,
 As death, but blacker in its woe and guilt.
 O Death! take any other name thou wilt,
 But if the stream of life run on the same,
 Its waters all are like the goblet spilt
 In desert sands: what virtue can reclaim
 The wasted life that now has nothing but a name?”

LXII.

As thus he spoke, a demon black and dread
 Stood near, and, with a rattle in his throat, [said,
 Grinned, gnashed his teeth, and scowled, and hoarsely
 “And dost thou seek of me an antidote
 For ills which thou upon thyself hast brought?”
 “And art thou Death?” said Azan; “is thy name
 ‘No more?’” “Yes, men miscall me thus.” “That coat
 Of armor, Death—I would with it reclaim
 My father’s bones and ashes, and restore his fame.

LXIII.

"Just now a giant, hungry, old, and thin,
 Took out that coffin from the wall, and ate
 The bones, nor left a trace of all therein;
 And then he turned, and from the door and gate
 Out into night he vanished, nor did wait
 To speak to me; except the words, 'No more!'
 Which echo like the oracles of fate.
 Is he thy servant, sent by thee before?
 Or is he partner? or thy rival on this shore?"

LXIV.

"My father and my foe," was Death's reply;
 "He takes my food away, but gives me more;
 He curses me for gluttony, and I
 Berate him as a dastard base and poor,
 Who prowls o'er my estate; I ramble o'er
 The fields behind him, asking to be fed;
 He turns, and, scowling, bids me go before,
 And choose my prey; but 'tis no sooner dead
 Than he appears and utters curses on my head.

LXV.

"Then he devours my victim, and denies
 That I am his begotten. But a day
 Is coming when his dim and greedy eyes
 These broad estates no longer shall survey.
 The opportunity doth but delay
 Its coming—then, O then, how gladly I
 The miserable, niggard churl will slay!
 But 'tis decreed the opportunity, [die."
 Which makes me heir, will bring the hour when I must

LXVI.

"He sent thee, then, to slay me?" Azan said.

"He came at thy own bidding, and I came
Because I ever in his footsteps tread.

For deeds of his I oft must bear the blame.

I kill thee not; my being is my name.

Lo, I am shadow all—no substance here!

Chide not a famished specter—no, for shame!

Dismiss thy folly, and forget thy fear.

I go; my father comes, and I shall reappear."

LXVII.

Thus spoke the ghost, and vanished; back again,

More spectral now than he appeared before,

The hoary giant came. An iron pen

Between his trembling fingers now he bore.

He looked, and traced the dim-writ words, "No more,"

Now nearly blotted out with dust and grime.

His foot-prints, too, he left upon the floor,

And o'er the table bent his form sublime,

And wrote a single word upon the marble—"Time."

LXVIII.

Then, like the wingèd lightning, on he sped;

Azan again upon his couch reclined.

How hot and bitter were the tears he shed,

As all his past misdoings filled his mind!

How unavailingly he now repined,

Wishing for magic power to undo

The evil deeds that life's dark pathway lined!

Alas! though hope may gild the future, who

Can blot the past of crime, and make it bright and new?

LXXII.

“Could ye repress the viper, Thought, within—
 The conscience, which no gift can satisfy—
 Which calls to life the buried past of sin,
 It might be good to live, or sweet to die;
 Or, could ye bring the Lethean cup, and I
 Drink till I drown the furies of the mind,
 Then might I hail you gladly, joyfully,
 And, to your will my destiny resigned,
 The past I would blot out, nor leave a trace behind.

LXXIII.

“But lo, along yon crumbling corridors,
 The ghastly relics of the shameful Past!
 How many a sun its ray benignant pours
 Upon the ruins of life’s dreary waste!
 See yonder broken columns, as they cast
 Their craggy shadows on these ancient walls!
 Behold the urn! ’t is broken, and the blast
 And Time have strewn the ashes through the halls.
 How reel along those aisles the ghosts of bacchanals!

LXXIV.

“Behold the banquet-table! How it groans,
 Not now with sweetest fruits and choicest wine,
 But with the moldy dust of putrid bones
 Of friends and counselors that erst were mine!
 Their once white robes now reek incarnadine,
 Where trembling hands in broken goblets pour
 Remorseful drops, to mingle with the brine
 From Virtue’s eyes, that ne’er shall sparkle more
 With Hope’s sweet light to meet on this forsaken shore.

LXXV.

"Look on these ghastly relies of the grave!
 Can ye rejuvenate the pulseless breast?
 Can ye restore the form which Nature gave
 This dust? Can ye the hand of Time arrest?
 Or drive the brood of sorrows from their nest?
 Can ye the living bid their life retain,
 With all its beauty, all its fragrance blest?
 Then welcome, happy pair! Adieu to pain!
 Oblivion, hide the past! I ne'er shall sigh again!"

LXXVI.

To him the two with blindest words replied:
 "Weep not; we come to drive thy tears away.
 No prayer of thine can ever be denied;
 Joy, as thy guardian angel, here shall stay,
 And Care shall vanish, seeking other prey
 Than that dear heart of thine; and in her flight
 The horrid crew, that fear the light of day,
 Shall go as her attendants with the night,
 And Paradise will bloom, nor fear a second blight.

LXXVII.

"Here, from this cup drink, and forget the past!
 Good-night to ghosts and goblins evermore!
 Drink freely; be the happy man, at last,
 That thou hast dreamed of being oft before.
 Heaven's purest nectar in this cup we pour."
 Then to his willing lips the cup they pressed,
 Of which he drank with eagerness, till o'er
 His senses crept a drowsy dream of rest, [breast.
 And from the cup the wine dripped down upon his

LXXVIII.

Then back upon their bosoms he reclined,
 In dull forgetfulness of all his woes—
 His fair locks floating in the morning wind,
 Laden with sweets of jasmine and the rose.
 No harsh sound broke upon his deep repose,
 For now he seemed to rest in Paradise,
 Beside the stream which, clear as crystal, flows
 'Neath evergreens and bright cerulean skies,
 Where music rich and full swells its soft symphonies

“Soft, ye zephyrs, fan his brow;
 Free from care he slumbers now.
 Come, ye gentle spirits, twine
 Myrtle wreath and columbine;
 Let their fragrance sweet dispel
 All the power of spirit fell
 That may ride upon the breeze;
 Lull him in the lap of Ease.

“Gently glide away, ye hours!
 Breezes from the dewy bowers
 Waft the notes of minstrels' gay,
 Piping to the opening day.
 Rosy morning, shed thy beam
 Softly, lovingly on him;
 Give him dreams of love and peace
 Sleeping in the lap of Ease.

“Ease, thy brother lull to sleep;
 Let him never wake to weep!

Care he never more shall know;
Joy shall like a river flow;
Pleasure, when he wakes, shall kiss
Those ambrosial locks of his;
And eternal youth shall crown
Brow ne'er clouded by a frown.

“See, how calm he sleeps! arise,
Glories of the heavenly skies!
Shout in triumph! Strike the lyre!
Sing, O sing, celestial choir!
Sing to him your sweetest song,
And its sweetest notes prolong,
Till the starlit arches ring
With the happy notes ye sing!

“Envious Time his tears may shed,
But his power no more we dread.
Fortune comes, and her caress
Shall enhance the happiness.
Sleep, fair youth, for health is thine;
Pleasure pours her sparkling wine;
Lethe's waters hide the past;
Tears have ceased to flow, at last.

“Ope, thou dark and silent sea,
Called by men Futurity!
We are coming to prepare
Mansions in thy islands fair.
Sleeper, dream of that bright shore,
Whither we have gone before;

There a brighter sun shall shine
On this happy head of thine.

“Dream of fountains pure and bright,
Boundless vistas of delight;
Future’s mines of wealth untold
Let thy wondering eyes behold;
And the sisters waiting round,
With the fadeless laurel crowned,
While the jasmine-scented breeze
Fans him in the lap of Ease.”

LXXIX.

Azan awoke, and wondered to behold
The change, as if by magic wrought: no king,
In Eastern song, e’er saw such heaps of gold;
No anchorite e’er saw an angel wing
So bright as that above him hovering.
A moment stood the fair divinity
Regarding him, then calmly said: “I bring
These treasures as a gift of Heaven to thee;
Beware, lest through thy folly it a curse may be.”

LXXX.

She spoke, and turned away; but Azan cried,
“Stay, thou celestial visitant, with me!”
Then Fortune turned, and, with a frown, replied:
“Companion of these two I ne’er can be—
Base prostitutes to sleep and lechery.
Drive hence these harlots; then my counsel heed,
And, through the sorrows of adversity,
My feet shall hasten to relieve thy need,
And prove, in all vicissitudes, thy friend indeed.”

LXXXI.

With rueful look he stole a furtive glance
 At Pleasure's face—how radiant it shone!
 In the bright eye the Love-god seemed to dance,
 And fairies seemed to flutter round her zone.
 He looked at Ease—her tresses streaming down
 Upon a bosom calm, and white as snow,
 And her soft hand, inclasped with his own,
 Set all the passions in his breast aglow—
 And, with a voice of firm decision, answered, "No!"

LXXXII.

"Farewell, then!" answered Fortune; "keep the gold
 To lavish on thy paramours—farewell!"
 Scarce was the answer finished when, behold!
 A shade o'er all the scene of beauty fell,
 And broken seemed to be the magic spell.
 A sense of horror rose in Azan's breast,
 Which he in vain endeavoring to quell,
 His fairest speeches to the two addressed,
 And with his most endearing blandishments caressed.

LXXXIII.

'T was all in vain; he looked upon the two—
 How ugly were they! but the lights were dim.
 He looked again—more horrid still they grew—
 Abominable ogres, gaunt and grim,
 With blood-shot eyeballs staring down at him!
 Alas! and was there no escape from these
 Outrageous cheats? or was it all a dream?
 He madly called to Pleasure and to Ease
 This horrid tumult in his bosom to appease.

LXXXIV.

Ease drew him back upon her bosom—he
 Snatched eagerly the cup in Pleasure's hand;
 He drank the fatal contents down; and she
 Invoked the powers of the spirit-land,
 To bring enchantment by their magic wand.
 Then from her throne neglected Reason fled,
 And wild Imagination took command,
 Until, with stupor overcome, his head [dead.
 Fell back, pulsation ceased, and he seemed cold and

LXXXV.

Ease loosed herself from such a cold embrace,
 And to a softer, warmer couch withdrew;
 While Pleasure led the wild and giddy chase
 Of phantoms that around the chamber flew.
 And when at last of this they weary grew,
 They turned to gather up the scattered pelf.
 When they had stolen all the gold, they threw
 The empty, broken goblets on the shelf,
 And, gliding softly out, left Azan to himself.

LXXXVI.

Could we the hour of dying choose, perhaps
 None better would appear than thus to sleep:
 When coaxing nurses take us in their laps
 With fairest promises their watch to keep,
 E'en when the form has crumbled to a heap
 Of ashes. If there be no other life,
 In which the crop of good or ill we reap
 From our own sowing, then we cheat the knife
 Of Atropos, who gloats alone o'er mortal strife.

LXXXVII.

And if there be another world, 'twere sweet
To enter it so gently that a breath
Of air would hardly stir before our feet
As they come gliding from the gloom of death;
So quietly to take the fadeless wreath
That not one single drop of dew would fall
From the fresh rose-bud to the ground beneath;
To stand so quiet in our place that all
Would start to hear us answer Gabriel's morning call.

LXXXVIII.

Yet when we think that Providence would lose
The epic or the lyric strain that we
Write in our lives, with praises most profuse
To him, the Arbiter of destiny,
We dare not ask the dying-hour to be
Aught but the grandest or the sweetest note
Of all life's weird and varied harmony;
And if his hand directed as we wrote
The life, the dying sentence we entire might quote.

LXXXIX.

Far rather thus, if we the cheated be;
And dying false, to falsehood wake again
With our mortality, and doomed to see
The same routine of labor, doubt, and pain;
And strive to realize, but all in vain,
The memory of something—false or true,
No matter—which we saw in Death's domain;
Then to these futile efforts bid adieu,
Unfriended and uncheered, the struggle to renew.

XC.

“Give me the death the friendly gods elect,”
 The pious heathen prayed. No Christian’s prayer
 Was ever better in this one respect:
 If God be left discretion anywhere
 To choose the whole for me, let it be there!
 His wisdom gave me being and a name;
 His goodness gave with life a lavish share
 Of joys and talents—let me blush for shame
 If faith refuse in death to trust to him the same!

XCI.

Azan at last awoke, and, looking round,
 Saw naught but desolation dark and drear;
 O’er the dull silence came no welcome sound,
 And o’er the gloom ne’er broke a ray of cheer.
 Naught but a bowl of wine was standing near—
 He seized and drank, but it was sweet no more.
 Down dropped the mocking cup upon the bier,
 Which all the wine accursèd running o’er,
 In drops like poison blood, dripped down upon the floor.

XCII.

Then warring passions raged in Azan’s breast,
 As winds opposing o’er the ocean wage
 Their elemental wars, when from the west
 And south in doubtful battle they engage.
 Tears did not flow his sorrow to assuage,
 Nor could he hope to find relief in prayer,
 When Conscience read on every blotted page
 The sentence of his condemnation there—
 Yet thus he rose, and cried, in accents of despair:

XCIII.

"O Time! thou hoary monitor of youth,
 Well dost thou thunder o'er my guilty head.
 'Tis well that he who spurned the way of truth
 Should suffer for his folly. But the dead—
 Are they thy minions still? or hast thou led
 Them prisoners to the bar—a witness thou,
 And not the judge? dost thou my crimes implead?
 O stay awhile thy charges! mercy now
 I plead before the law, yet to the sentence bow.

XCIV.

"I still am in thy own domain—I see
 Thy foot-prints and thy name before me traced,
 Though where thy favorite walks were wont to be
 The foot-prints now are nearly all erased.
 Still there are relics left in Memory's waste
 Enough, by which I may the whole unfold;
 And surely these, O Time, are not the last!
 O canst thou now my wretchedness behold,
 And turn away from me all pitiless and cold?

XCV.

"Then back, corrupting nature, to the grave!
 Why living still, thou unencoffined clay,
 To every empty flattery a slave—
 To every bitter agony a prey?
 Away, ye relics of the world, away!
 Let my unshrouded frame in silence rot!
 Down, dust! the strong and vigorous to-day
 To-morrow is avoided or forgot;
 Others will dance above thy grave, and heed it not."

XCVI.

Thus Azan spoke, in accents wild and loud,
 As, gazing, he beheld the coffin near;
 And madly raving, tore away his shroud,
 And naked sought to fall upon his bier.
 But hands unseen restrained, and, pale with fear,
 He turned and saw two monsters, gaunt and lean;
 The first, in rags, repressed a rising tear,
 But wore a trace of virtue in his mien,
 Bespeaking better days and joys that once had been.

XCVII.

The other, wan and ghastly, on him gazed
 From out a sunken, dull, delirious eye;
 And slowly then his bony fingers raised,
 And pressed them to his lips all parched and dry.
 Still steadily he gazed—he heaved a sigh,
 And sickly odors floated in the air.
 In horror Azan rose, and sought to fly;
 But the fiend seized and held him trembling there,
 And gnashed his teeth as for a banquet to prepare.

XCVIII.

“What will ye,” he exclaimed, “forbidding pair,
 That thus ye drag me from my welcome grave?
 Go, seek the halls of luxury, and there
 The gay, voluptuous, death-abhorring slave
 Of lust and wine extend your hand to save.
 He can repay you from his heaps of gold,
 While I have naught but that which Nature gave,
 And these white robes that did my limbs infold,
 Once ready for the grave—all motionless and cold.

XCIX.

"Away, unwelcome! let me die alone!
 Ye mock my anguish with your company.
 Love ye the music of a dying groan,
 Or the dull languor of the closing eye,
 That thus ye haunt me in my misery?
 Then stretch my aching limbs upon my bed,
 And when is heaved the last expiring sigh,
 If ye have songs to sing or tears to shed,
 Exult or weep o'er me when I am with the dead."

C.

Thus Azan spoke—the maniac in reply,
 Tenfold more ghastly growing, thus began:
 "I am Disease; and didst thou hope to die
 Nor pay thy debt to me, unworthy man?
 Review this catalogue of banquets, scan
 This longer list of thy debaucheries
 With bacchanal and graceless courtesan,
 Nor hope thou e'er in peace to close thy eyes
 Until the debt is paid, in pains, and tears, and sighs."

CI.

Poor Azan shuddered; the wild maniac still
 Gazed on his pallid features as he spoke:
 "Think not that thou canst violate at will
 Thy nature's laws, and yet escape the stroke
 Of vengeance. See! no longer canst thou cloak
 Thy lewdness, when thy offspring rise; yes, when
 Upon my haggard visage thou dost look,
 Behold thy son! Disease, the scourge of men,
 Returns a prodigal to father's house again.

CIL.

“Behold, I famish! yet of all thy store
 No part has ever been allotted me.
 Thou shalt not drive me hungry from thy door,
 Thy first-begotten of Debauchery.
 Long have I dwelt with Poverty; and see,
 He comes to claim my long arrears as due.
 Pay that thou owest, poor Mortality;
 Thy present and thy past existence rue,
 Nor cringe so dastardly when vengeance is in view.

CIII.

“Prepare that bloated lump of flesh of thine,
 So long indulged in sleep and lecheries,
 Not now for brimming bowls of sparkling wine,
 But for the pains of languishing disease.
 Shrink not when on thy quivering flesh I seize,
 Nor when the blood runs boiling through thy veins;
 Cry not in anguish when a host of these,
 Thy children, shall encircle thee with pains,
 And Poverty shall claim what of their feast remains.”

CIV.

He ceased, and Azan's trembling form embraced,
 Which strove in vain against the foul caress;
 While tears of penitence each other chased
 Fast down his fevered cheeks—O who could guess
 What weight of woe, what utter wretchedness,
 Those tears extorted? Now of hope forlorn,
 Without a comforter—with no redress
 Against the insults—of his vigor shorn—
 O rather die, or better had he ne'er been born!

CV.

Who recks, though in the hour of deepest woe
 No friend is near to shed a tear of love,
 If, while the storms of sorrow rage below,
 The bow of promise spans the cloud above?
 Thence bears an angel, like the sacred dove,
 The branch of peace across the ebbing sea;
 But vultures gather where the wretched prove
 The bitterness of hopeless misery,
 In which the direst curse of Heaven is to be.

CVI.

For when like furies dire misfortunes come,
 Or hound-like hunt their flying victim down,
 Man fain would seek a refuge in the tomb;
 But there he sees his fate, IMMORTAL, frown,
 And Death, abashed, lays off his cypress crown,
 To minister to life that cannot die.
 O what a burden in the hopeless groan
 Of him who, having reached the boundary,
 At last discovers that 'tis all in vain to fly!

CVII.

Then, let disease and pinching poverty
 Intrude upon the privacy of woe;
 Let man discover that the word "To be"
 Means anguish, destitution, overthrow
 Of all that he has known or hoped to know;
 Unveil the secrets of Futurity,
 And bid unfailing bitter waters flow;
 Who then could grieve how soon the stern decree
 Might pass the lips of Fate, and he should cease to be?

CVIII.

Who would not, then, arraign the hapless day
 Which ushered him to light and wretchedness?
 Who would not loathe the tenement of clay
 Which holds th' unwilling spirit in duress,
 Could he but dread the coming evils less?
 Here e'en Despair makes man his sport once more,
 And to his anxious question answers, "Yes,
 There are unfading pleasures still in store
 For the immortal, when this life's poor play is o'er."

CIX.

Scarce feeling that the present is his own,
 Man yields his only portion to Despair,
 Who, simulating Hope, leaves him alone
 To pile his baseless fabric in the air;
 He whispers that there are no sorrows there;
 Care's heavy wings essay to soar in vain
 Upon the pure Elysian atmosphere,
 And all the countless demons of her train
 Are barred forever from that limitless domain.

CX.

Thus as the eagle, prisoned ere he knew
 Why his strong pinions were by Nature given,
 Looks from his cage upon the ether blue,
 And longs to mount those azure fields of heaven—
 So man still yearns, though by his sorrow driven
 Back to his narrow cell; e'en there his lays
 Blend with the melancholy moans of even,
 While the proud spirit sighs her plumes to raise,
 And join the bands angelic in their hymns of praise.

CXL.

Ay, there are moments when these fleshly bars
Break like the cobweb in the driving gale,
When the 'scaped spirit seeks again the stars,
And to the choirs celestial shouts, "All hail!"
Moments of ecstasy, in which the wail
Of earth is drowned in music of the spheres;
And, though the fiercest storms of grief assail,
Defiant she mounts upward through her tears,
Shouting a jubilee which rings through endless years.

CXII.

But O the pain that gives these longings birth!
 The way as traversed, not as when reviewed—
 The one is Moab's gloomy waste on earth,
 The other Nebo's top, where Moses stood.
 Behind is naught but law and solitude;
 Before are Freedom's hill-tops, grand and green;
 Behind, a zigzag path reads, "God is good;"
 Before, the New Jerusalem is seen; [been."
 And we cry, "God is better than our thoughts have

CXIII.

But here we stay—not yet the land possess—
To eat the wormwood ere we cross the stream;
The desert wand’rer on the mountain crest
Can only look—not even time to dream—
A darker night succeeds the meteor gleam.
So to the fitful fire in Azan’s breast
Succeeds a gloom that will far darker seem;
But now awhile, by weariness opprest,
We close the story of his journeyings, and rest.

CANTO SECOND.

I.

A N old, deserted hut—a barren field—
A filthy pool, where bones and carcasses,
Half eaten, lie—some half by mud concealed,
From some foul bubbles rising—filthiness
Of every kind—sad marks of sore distress,
Or foulest villainy, on every side are seen.
E'en Nature seems to wear a beggar's dress,
Where naught except the filthy pool is green,
And naught is merry save wild beasts, or wilder men.

II.

Swift through the deepening twilight flits the owl,
And, like a harbinger of death anew,
Hoots, and swoops down upon a carcass foul,
Or perches on the hut, and cries "Too-hoo!"
A voice so sad, so gay, so false, so true.
The old hut cracks, and reels, and settles; all
Surroundings are of most ungainly hue,
And Darkness, throwing o'er its sable pall,
Bids Melancholy here her moody train recall.

III.

Steep mountain peaks in silence awful frown
Above the drear, deserted vale below;
But from their crags foul waters trickle down:
They wear no coronets of spotless snow.
Foul, poisonous weeds, and vines, and bushes grow
Where lurk the serpent and the beast of prey
Till night or hunger urge them forth, to go
Along the track of wilder men than they,
Who practice deeds of blood they dare not do by day.

IV.

The pool spreads to a lake from frequent rains,
But sinks away by channels under ground;
Snow often falls upon the fetid plains,
But dark, and stained, and poisonous 't is found.
Oft are the mountains with the glacier crowned,
But never glitter with a diamond sheen;
Dense smoky vapors ever hang around,
Which seem at times with rank infection green,
And form a canopy to fit the gloomy scene.

V.

The sun shines on this vale with sickly light:
The eye of day is jaundiced—not a ray
But feeds a poison-herb, or brings a blight
To all things healthful; cheer is chased away,
And Nature mournfully cries, "Woe the day!"
The moon comes not with soft and silver light,
But, as her beams across the valley stray,
Each cloud and crag turns to some mournful sprite,
And every night-breeze seems to echo, "Woe the night!"

VI.

No zephyr ever wakes the song-bird, when
Morn's rosy fingers touch the dewy bowers;
None softly sigh "Good-by" to day; in vain
One seeks to find where he may pass the hours
With air all laden with the breath of flowers.
Hot storms and cold, sirocco, boreas,
Scorch, chill, by turns, until the failing powers
Give o'er their struggle; on the poison-grass
The weary traveler falls, and Death his victim has.

VII.

Within the hut, more sad if possible
 The aspect ruinous insults the eye:
 A skull and scattered bones proclaim too well
 The scenes of death—forsooth, the agony
 Of torture, or perchance the fate to die,
 The last of an unhappy race, alone—
 No friend, not e'en a stranger standing by,
 To catch from dying breast the parting moan,
 Or lay him in the grave, uncoffined and unknown.

VIII.

Bats flit along the open roof, or hang
 Pendant from rafters where the sooty thread,
 Woven by spider while the owlet sang
 “Too-whit, too-hoo!” without just o'er his head,
 Swings in the night-breeze now above the dead.
 Moldy, decaying timbers shed a light
 More ghostly than the Night-queen ever shed
 O'er walls where worse than plague has fixed its blight,
 Or Death his image leaves the timid to affright.

IX.

Gliding along the sill, the serpent rears
 His head and hisses. O'er the rotten door
 A dismal relic of departed years
 Looks calmly down upon the filthy floor.
 Though faded are the colors which it bore
 When new, the portrait of a youth is seen:
 The face recalls the child of wealth, but o'er
 The canvas water, poisonous and green,
 Has trickled, and defaced the once irradiant mien.

X.

A pallid sufferer on some moldy straw
 Lies helpless 'neath this picture on the wall.
 Fever and Hunger at his vitals gnaw,
 And Frenzy holds the intellect in thrall.
 A fiend is bending o'er him, pouring gall
 Down his reluctant throat. In vain he pleads;
 In vain he groans; in vain the tear-drops fall;
 In vain he talks of wishes, or of needs;
 The fury only talks of long-enacted deeds.

XI.

Then, tossing fretfully, the sufferer pale
 Turns to the picture, crying, "He! he! he!
 What art thou doing in this dismal vale?
 What is there here that one would wish to see,
 That thou art looking now so straight at me?
 Go from me now—I long to go to sleep;
 There, that is kind—good-night; be sure to be
 Prompt to the hour—my promise I will keep;
 To-morrow—yes, to-morrow; mind, the stream is deep."

XII.

Twilight is deepening on the dreary waste,
 While thro' the cracks the ghostly moonbeams stray,
 And o'er the features of the poor man cast
 Expression far more haggard e'en than they.
 Deep sleep has come—the fiend has slipped away,
 And crouched within the skull upon the floor;
 A hungry fox has come in search of prey,
 And rears his forefeet o'er the ruined door— [more.
 Looks round, bounds off, returns and looks around once

XIII.

An owl above the picture makes her perch,
 And on the sleeper turns her stolid stare;
 A mole from out the rubbish comes in search
 Of something better than his moldy lair;
 A serpent coils upon a ruined chair,
 While toads hop unmolested underneath;
 A low and sullen murmur shakes the air,
 While naught within the hut, except the breath
 Of the deep sleeper, breaks the horrid spell of death.

XIV.

Slowly the moon retreats behind the clouds,
 As deeper grow the mutterings of the storm;
 And thickest darkness all within enshrouds,
 Till it were vain to seek the wasted form
 Upon the floor, in whom the current warm
 Is rushing madly ere forever chilled.
 In vain are all the gestures of that arm,
 Directed by the mind with frenzies filled,
 Ere the quick-beating heart in Death's embrace is stilled.

XV.

A sharp, quick bark is answered by a howl
 From a deep mountain gorge, which rings again
 With the wild note—to which the moping owl
 Returns her doleful, querulous refrain.
 Then there is something at the door; the plain
 Is dotted now with jack-o'-lanterns; white
 Clouds skim along the pool; the drops of rain
 Begin to fall; loud moan the winds of night,
 As if they sang the dirge of some departed sprite.

XVI.

The rain-drops thicken; through the roof they drip
 Down to the picture—in the sleeper's face;
 They sprinkle poison in the eye and lip,
 Then down the cheek a muddy channel trace.
 The rotten hut, with phosphorus ablaze,
 Now shows the fox, the picture, mole, and owl,
 And the pale sleeper on his cot so base—
 O'er which two figures of appearance foul
 Are bending silently, with most infernal scowl.

XVII.

Chilled by the rain, the sleeper wakes; but still
 The wild delirium o'er the reason reigns;
 The forms his mad, distorted fancy fill
 With horror; now in dire affright he strains
 His limbs, as if to break his fancied chains;
 He cries; he chides, entreats, commands, cajoles;
 Then to his fancied children he complains;
 Then on his bed of moldy straw he rolls,
 And sings, while Death himself a solemn curfew tolls:

“Children, I am old and weary—
 Kiss me once again good-night;
 Kiss good-night, though dreary, dreary,
 Whether in the gloom or light.

“Kiss me, children of my folly,
 Though I now am weak and old;
 Come, pale daughter, Melancholy,
 Kiss me; I am growing cold.

“Clasp me closer, burning Fever;
 I am shivering in thy arms.
 Wan Consumption, do not leave her
 Till again my body warms.

“Ho! my darling boy, Rheumatic,
 Climb upon thy father's knees;
 Keep me in a frame ecstatic—
 Torture! do not let me freeze!

“Gout, assist thy elder brother—
 Come and wring my icy toes;
 Ah, dear orphan, how thy mother
 Died, and left me all her woes!

“Come around me, children, nearer—
 Let me tell you all my will:
 Ye'll be sold at auction dearer
 Than if I could keep you still.

“Go: though orphans to life's battle,
 Thousands will invite you home;
 Though ye may be sold like cattle,
 Ye shall lords at last become.

“Slay your father—eat the eater—
 For that legacy ye hold.
 Take no pottage mess, or meat, or
 Lands, or houses, state or gold.”

XVIII.

A long, wild howl, a gust of wind, a moan,
 Then nothing but the rattling roof and rain.
 The sick man's forehead is as cold as stone;
 His wild entreaties all have been in vain.
 Now slowly on his back he turns again—
 Opens his eyes upon his nurses: they
 Are holding consultation—it is plain
 That both of them can now no longer stay;
 But fierce debate arises which shall go away.

XIX.

"He owes me most," said one, whose sickly breath
 Filled all the room with stifling odor. "No!"
 Replied the other, all in rags. "His death
 Would rob me quite; it is thy place to go;
 There are ten thousand who a balance owe
 To thee. Disease, thou hast the key to doors
 Where princes roll in luxury; and, lo!
 Thou comest to this hut to snatch by force
 From ragged Poverty her last and scant resource.'

XX.

"But right is right," retorted pale Disease;
 "I mean to gather of the rich my dues,
 And of the poor as well. No special pleas
 In case of common justice are of use.
 What! turn my very largest debtor loose,
 Because he is a beggar now—when years
 And years have passed, while I have held a truce
 And taken due-bills for his long arrears?
 Shall I receipt them now for Poverty's false tears?'

XXI.

“My tears may not be true,” said Poverty;
 “Thy smiles are false—false as fickle Wealth.
 My rags hide pride, and thou hast none, I see;
 For oft I catch thee aping rosy Health.
 I’ve seen thee slip to banquet halls by stealth,
 And touching glasses with some beauteous maid,
 Defile her lips with thy outrageous filth,
 And rob her—yes, for robbing is thy trade,
 And falsehood is thy right: by theft thy debts are paid.”

XXII.

“What wouldst thou of this wretch? How long must I
 Wait on the laggard, if I let him go?
 I am not anxious for him now to die;
 But promise me that he no more shall owe,
 If I allow him respite. If I show
 Favor to thee, I claim a fair return.”
 Thus said Disease, and, turning, soft and low
 She spoke to Azan: “From experience learn
 That I will never spare if thou my warnings spurn.”

XXIII.

Azan looked up—a shadow passed the door,
 And mingled with the darkness. Poverty
 Came nearer to him; stooping o’er
 His pallet, looked upon his face to see
 If health had now regained supremacy;
 Then felt his pulse, and from his pocket drew
 The last few coppers: “These belong to me,”
 He said, as down the empty purse he threw,
 Adding, insultingly, “They are not half my due.”

XXIV.

“Take them,” said Azan; “I had once been told
The rich alone insulted and oppressed—
That Avarice required a world of gold
To live and thrive; but I have fondly guessed
The poor man is as greedy as the rest,
And knows no more of generosity
Than those of all that heart can wish possessed.
Most like the serpent, Avarice, I see,
Lives on the air, if of its diet robbed it be.

XXV.

“Ay, worse than wealth—the poor still hang around,
Like lazy swine beneath a barren tree,
Whence once by chance there dropped upon the ground
Some scraps which ravens, from satiety,
Threw down and flew away. ’T was robbery
For ravens thus to eat another’s fruit;
Yet they in theft were generous and free.
The swine were base and craven in their suit;
So, greedy as the rich, the poor are mean to boot.”

XXVI.

Then back upon his side he turned, and lay
Musing o’er the vicissitudes of time.
What strange things happened sometimes in a day!
How many splendid prizes won by crime!
How many were not forced the steep to climb,
“Where fame’s proud temple shines o’er earth afar!”
But mounting at one leap to heights sublime,
There drove at ease the great triumphal car,
And added to night’s galaxy another star!

XXVII.

Could he—his eye fell on the picture; thought
 At once recalled to him the wasted past.
 This of the stained and ruined picture wrought
 The ghost of Time, who now, to shun the blast,
 Stood in the door, then turned aside in haste;
 Then back and forth he strode upon the floor,
 And, pointing to the picture, as he cast
 The broken skull-bones through the ruined door,
 Repeated thrice the words, "No more! no more! no
 more!"

XXVIII.

Wild was poor Azan's horror; he beheld
 The stern remembrancer before him there.
 Oft from the palace had he been repelled;
 Now had he come this poverty to share?
 Or was it to augment the dark despair,
 That here he stood, repeating o'er and o'er
 Those doleful words—a prophecy, a prayer,
 A prohibition, or lament, that tore [more?"
 Loose the last heart-string, in the two sad words, "No

XXIX.

Deep was poor Azan's grief; his bosom heaved;
 He sighed; his eyes were all suffused with tears;
 Sobs rose to wails; but yet the more he grieved,
 More horrid visions of his murdered years
 Arose. But weakness overcame his fears,
 And penitence brought sleep so calm and sweet
 That he forgot the past and its arrears.
 It seemed that, weeping at the giant's feet,
 Forgiveness he had bought, and struck a balance-sheet.

XXX.

But, as he slept, the giant reached and tore
 Away the wretched covering from the hail;
And then he wrote upon the wall, "No more!"
 And turned, and o'er the sleeper's visage pale
 His fingers passed; he touched the body frail,
And through the locks of glossy raven hue
 He scattered silver threads; then through the gale,
Across the deep and filthy pool, he flew,
Nor woke the silent sleeper e'en to say "Adieu!"

XXXI.

But Poverty still lingered there; the wind
 Grew colder; wilder grew the winter storm;
And Time had left no comforter behind,
 Or nurse to raise his worn, emaciate form.
Base Poverty was now intent on harm:
He pulled the clothing piece by piece away,
 And, as the sleeper woke with wild alarm,
The craven wretch was base enough to say,
"Azan, this is my clothing; I must have my pay."

XXXII.

Thus stripped he left him; out upon the night
 Went this half demon—canonized outlaw,
That pleads his sainthood from his ragged plight,
 And prays to Heaven only for his maw.
For right itself he does not care a straw;
For honor, naught; for hell he votes to-day,
 That he on it eternity may draw
A lottery ticket large enough to pay
The fees of Purgatory and—a meal a day.

XXXIII.

Ye poor, indeed! God's humble, honest poor!
 I set you not along in catalogue
 With him I picture here. Ah, no! before
 I do such deed, let me be called a dog,
 A slander on my race, a shameless rogue
 Of character—whatever ye may choose—
 And turn me out to wander o'er some bog,
 Where reptiles, fed on deadly nightshade's juice,
 May in my writhing flesh pour all their poison loose.

XXXIV.

No, no; I love God's poor; but they are rich—
 Too rich to steal, or fawn upon the great;
 Too rich to beg, or envy kings a niche
 In Fame's grand catacomb or roll of state;
 Too rich to murmur at untoward Fate,
 Or ask a God, in whom they trust, to clear
 The road they tread through regions desolate
 To that celestial city, which they hear
 Has not a pauper in it, search it far and near.

XXXV.

Ye poor in spirit, who have given up
 Your claims to justice under tortured laws,
 And on your faith in God have fixed your hope
 That he will not forget to plead your cause,
 Hope on, bear on; as life the nearer draws
 To death, as deeper poverty may grind,
 Your spirit shall be purified from dross,
 And o'er your rags the King of heaven shall bind
 The royal purple, when your cares are left behind.

XXXVI.

How sadly Azan learned that Poverty
 Brought not the heavenly boon of love and peace!
 That hither had the Devil triumphed, he
 Assuring happiness, and health, and ease!
 But he was growing wiser by degrees,
 Now having found that bare conditions make
 No real difference; that all the pleas
 For wealth or poverty for virtue's sake
 Were stratagems, by which hell might advantage take.

XXXVII.

Then rose the thought, "Why drooping lonely here,
 Eking a miserable life away?
 Why yielding to the shadows of despair
 The thoughts disowning kinship with to-day?
 Why should a deathless spirit court decay,
 When worlds were atoms as compared to it?
 Why give to nothingness a willing prey,
 Or fear the fragile tenement to quit,
 And plunge into the bosom of the Infinite?

XXXVIII.

"Why drooping here, when worlds on worlds of life
 To action call? Despondent man, arise!
 Wouldst thou be happy? Plunge into the strife,
 And seize the trophy ere the moment flies.
 Why dim with unavailing tears thy eyes,
 When he who rules must first o'ercome his foes?
 Why sigh and dream of deeds of high emprise,
 When Fate has given them alone to those
 Who break the chains of dull, inanimate repose?

XXXIX.

“Who wields the fiery thunderbolts of Jove?
 Who guides the obedient nations with a nod?
 Who lifts his head the rolling clouds above,
 And shares the secrets of Olympus’ god?
 Who sways the scepter, who the awful rod,
 That holds a trembling universe in awe?
 Who mounts on eagles’ wings where others plod?
 Who can from all the lower herd withdraw,
 And from the smoking mount proclaim eternal law?

XL.

“Who through the darkness wakes with Philomel,
 With sweetest music charming sullen Night?
 Who, where the solitary sentinel
 Stalks forth upon the distant mountain height,
 Walks in his meditations of delight?
 Who, in the spheres dim twinkling through the vast,
 Immeasurable depths of infinite
 Extension, sees a realm of glory placed
 For him, where he may sit a deathless king at last?

XLI.

“Who, ere Aurora’s blushing face foretells
 Th’ approaching chariot of the king of day,
 Mounts on the crimson morning cloud, and swells
 Along the skies his matin roundelay?
 Who mounts the fiery car, away, away,
 To shine with planets in that glorious zone
 Where ether holds the clouds of milky ray,
 Paving a pathway to th’ Eternal’s throne,
 Tented in clouds of light, which he can pierce alone?

XLII.

“He who, in direst fate’s extremity,
The peevish buffetings of Time can spurn,
And, fearless launching on the stormiest sea,
Heave not one sigh forever to return;
Who feels within his mortal bosom burn
The quenchless fires of immortality;
Who cares not if he break the fragile urn
Which locks so rich a treasure, made to be
Copartner of its Sire, godlike, immortal, free.

XLIII.

“Then, wake to glory! let thy watch-word ring
In clarion notes along the welkin blue;
Let Resolution nerve thy venturous wing
The storm of envious opposition through.
The glowing goal keep steadily in view,
And heed not though an angry world may rage;
What mortal has done mortal still may do,
And Destiny its favor will engage
To execute its word and laws from age to age.”

XLIV.

Thus seemed a voice to speak—he turned to look,
And there beside him stood a haughty form,
That ne’er had stooped to wear another’s yoke,
Nor bowed beneath the peltings of life’s storm.
There kindled in his eye no feeling warm,
But stern and cold on all the gaze he bent,
As polar snows glare on the eye, and charm
With streaming light along the firmament,
Which freezes and misleads by its assistance lent.

XLV.

As charms the basilisk, e'en while the gaze
 Is terrible to him who meets its eye,
 And nearer draws the victim, yet essays
 In vain the baleful influence to fly,
 Uttering anon a strange, affrighted cry,
 So seemed the gaze of Pride—this image fell—
 To overcome him, and to draw him nigh,
 While every effort to destroy the spell
 But brought him nearer yet the fatal brink of hell.

XLVI.

Was it a saint of light? What secret power
 Led him to gaze again upon those eyes?
 What made him shudder, though he did not cower
 Before a presence he would fain despise?
 He felt that he from poverty could rise,
 And look contempt on wealth; that friend or foe
 Became a myth; that it was neither wise
 Nor fitting to a man, however low,
 To strut successful, or to mourn an overthrow.

XLVII.

Selfhood—such is the name which Pride affects—
 Selfhood is next to Deity akin.
 If man God's image bears in all respects,
 Selfhood is man's prerogative, and sin
 Is more in not retaining it within
 Than to assert his birthright. Such the thought
 Which silenced Azan's questionings; so thin
 The gloss of sophistry the tempter taught,
 Which his own ruin and a world's so vast has wrought.

XLVIII.

Beside this tempter knelt a fragile frame,
 With face upturned and supplicating eye;
 Down her soft cheeks the tears of silent shame,
 Not for herself, but Azan, constantly
 Streamed, as she prayed, "O hear Humility!"
 But vain her tears, though armed with rage, and strong,
 She told of poverty returning: he
 Cared not for pangs which he must feel ere long,
 If he should longer listen to the tempter's tongue.

XLIX.

But Pride, with haughty look, bade Azan rise
 And follow him; and e'en in Reason's spite,
 Amid the storms now rending earth and skies,
 Forth stepped to try this Selfhood's magic might.
 Ah, 't was indeed a pitiable sight!
 How woe-begone, and tremulous, and pale!
 How wretched was he in that beggar's plight!
 Once ruddy as the rose in Tempe's vale;
 Now, haggard and in rags, he staggered in the gale.

L.

But Pride was by him: onward through the cold,
 Inflexible, unfeeling, he pursued
 His course. At times in deepening snow-drifts rolled
 The feeble follower; but, harsh and rude,
 Pride's voice with anger stirred his feeble blood—
 Anger at weakness, which he strove in vain
 To hide; though, through his want of fortitude,
 A greater mental weakness, it was plain,
 He sought to hide in rage, that scouted Reason's reign.

LI.

At last, when fainting in the driving snow,
 Azan lay down, and said, "Here let me die!"
 Pride looked, with lofty mien, on him below,
 And said: "Poor wretch! what boots it there to lie,
 And, like a fool or love-sick maiden, cry?
 Look up! why shudder at this driving storm?
 Why fear wild spirits? But move on—they fly;
 Thy will can into glorious cars transform [warm.
 These clouds, and in thy veins the blood again will

LII.

"Look up! thou 'rt coming to thy kingdom, now;
 Towers pinnacled in clouds—these are thy own.
 Before thy scepter Nature's head will bow,
 And deathless spirits wait around thy throne,
 Expectant, till thy every wish be known.
 Say, wilt thou die? or wilt thou live, and see
 Thyself the autocrat of worlds, alone?
 Arise, and put away those rags, and be
 Arrayed in robes that suit thy claim to royalty!"

LIII.

Azan looked up; the mountains seemed to be
 Transformed to towers, and the driven snows
 To beds of down; and each acclivity
 Above the drapery of clouds arose,
 Like a bright mansion where the gods repose.
 "Here, inaccessible to all below,
 Thou mayst ascend beyond the reach of foes,
 And, from thy height beside the Thunderer, throw
 Thy direst bolts, till all thy princely power may know."

LIV.

Thus Pride persuaded; but Humility
 Pointed below to valleys calm and green;
 She bade him seek in them security,
 Where calm contentment blest the quiet scene.
 The cooling zephyr, not the tempest keen,
 Blew in that vale; there stretched a velvet lawn,
 Instead of barren rocks, bright rills between;
 Birds caroled there to greet the vernal dawn, [upon.
 Instead of howling beasts that prowled those heights

LV.

“Look down,” said she; a modest, humble grace
 Betrayed itself in every word and tone,
 While heavenly radiance gleamed around her face,
 Which o’er this frigid, howling desert shone
 With warmth, and health, and magic, never known
 To man, except when Heaven deigns to smile
 And shine upon his frozen heart of stone.
 “Look down,” repeated she; he looked, and while
 He gazed a tear stole down his cheek, and reached the
 soil.

LVI.

A lovely flower then in a moment burst
 From the cold earth; its fragrance spread around,
 And a fair Eden o’er a world accurst
 Seemed now to dawn, with fadeless beauty crowned.
 Now on his ear there seemed to break the sound
 Of angel minstrels, and, his flower forgot,
 He upward glanced; Pride still upon him frowned.
 Abashed, he looked again upon the spot
 Where grew the flower; but all in vain—he found it not!

LVII.

“Impostor!” muttered Azan to himself,
 And looked at Pride: a dismal scowl o’erspread
 His visage as he mounted to a shelf
 Of rocks, and scanned the rugged cliffs o’erhead.
 “Stay there, thou cringing coward!” then he said
 To Azan, seeking vainly for the flower.
 He, then arousing, up the mountain fled
 From poor Humility, who, weeping sore,
 Cried after him, “Farewell, if we shall meet no more!”

LVIII.

Thus saying, she a lonely pathway took
 Down the steep mountain-side. Along the dell,
 At times, would Azan stop and take a look,
 In answer to that sorrowful “Farewell;”
 Then heard he notes like those of Philomel,
 But they were growing fainter far away:
 Pride called again; he could no longer dwell
 In reverie—he must perforce obey
 The tyrant, which had now o’er him completest sway.

LIX.

Yet ever and anon he turned, and stood,
 And looked, until the shadows closed her round;
 And he was left alone with Solitude
 And Pride—more dismal trio ne’er was found
 Through all the dark and dreary world beyond
 The Stygian flood. Now up he looked again,
 And saw his guide, who had so often frowned,
 Smiling at last, but smiling in disdain,
 As now he pointed up to Fate and his domain.

LX.

“Behold,” said he, “‘I will’ omnipotent!
 Look up: thy mightier self is sitting there
 Enthroned forever—yet one steep ascent,
 And thou hast won. Then bid adieu to care,
 And mount, the empire with thyself to share.
 See! Fate is hoodwinked, though he holds the rod;
 He often blusters, bidding men beware;
 But he is impotent. ‘I will’ can nod,
 And Fate will abdicate, and man alone be god.”

LXI.

Such and much more spoke Pride; and Azan thought,
 “Surely no other can his word deny.
 ‘I will’ has all the past of magic wrought,
 And it must work its future, too, or die.
 Yes, ’tis a god in dotage I descry
 Upon that throne; and soon that rule must end—
 Down from his throne must drop the hoary lie,
 And in his stead will I myself ascend,
 And to the business of the chance-ruled world attend.”

LXII.

High on the loftiest peak, as heaven high,
 A gloomy, cold, relentless monarch sat.
 Who wore a blackened bandage o’er his eye,
 Now folding in this shape, and now in that;
 Now was his body thin, and now ’twas fat;
 Now flashing fire, now wrapped around with snow;
 As whimsical as love, as blind as hate,
 He sometimes hid, then granted man to know;
 But all the reason was because he made it so.

LXIII.

The spectral shadows of eternity,
 Both past and future, hung around his throne;
 The present, like a sparkle on the sea,
 But for a moment on the vision shone,
 And quick as lightning was forever gone.
 But time was nameless on his calendar,
 And day had neither dawn nor setting sun;
 The universe had but a twinkling star
 Set in his bosom as it gleamed from realms afar.

LXIV.

Eyes waking first to sight inquiringly
 Looked, till they dimmed in film of age, in vain
 One feature to make out with certainty,
 Or trace the broken links in being's chain,
 From man to him and back to naught again.
 Unutterably vast, and yet so small
 That a bare atom could the whole contain;
 Swayed by a breath, moved by a sparrow's fall;
 Yet the immovable, unbounded, All in all.

LXV.

Name of the nameless, yet of all the Sire;
 Parting and binding, bound by all and none;
 The heathen worshiped him of old with fire,
 And others saw him in the stars and sun;
 Some heard him in the thunder's distant groan,
 And others in the lightning saw his eye;
 Some thought that he most easily was won
 By prayers or life of stern austerity;
 But most let life run on, nor sought the how or why.

LXVI.

There silence thundered, while the deafening roar
 Of storm and cataract grew still as death;
 And farthest out upon the farthest shore
 Of worlds unnumbered, there his faintest breath
 Heaved more than fires a continent beneath;
 As earthquakes, rising in their giant might,
 In mutterings low forbade impending wrath,
 And rock-built cities, sinking in a night, [light.
 Leave now but death and waste to greet the morning

LXVII.

Place, circumscribed or boundless let it be,
 Was far too wide or narrow for his throne;
 Yet it must have a fixed locality,
 Unvisited, and held by him alone.
 Eternal wisdom, shadowy and unknown,
 Became eternal foolishness in men;
 Necessity was chance, and they in one
 Blent and divided, till the sharpest ken
 Was dazed, and darkness settled over all again.

LXVIII.

E'en Time his chariot wheeled ere yet he came
 Within the sacred precincts of his power;
 Fortune, the golden-winged, capricious dame,
 Dared not beyond her proper limits soar;
 The best and highest never might explore
 The bottomless abyss, where only he
 Had made his residence forever more,
 And set by an immutable decree
 The bounds of Time and Space, and his obscurity.

LXIX.

Hence launching in their orbs the glowing spheres,
 Their bounds he traced, and their appointed flight;
 And to his first-born, Time, their destined years
 Along their courses, through the trackless night.
 These scintillations of their essence bright
 Their colors took, and, intermingling, wove
 That universal bow, whose arch of light
 Spans the vast concave where majestic move
 The star-winged hosts of immortality and love.

LXX.

Hence to obedient matter and to mind
 Their laws and due relations did he give,
 And those amazing barriers he assigned
 Which vaunting creature ne'er could pass and live;
 Hence taught he boastful Reason to perceive
 How little man can know, when stretched beyond
 Are fields in which it never can arrive,
 Where all the ages but a span are found,
 And thought and reason, like a drop in ocean, drowned.

LXXI.

Long Azan looked, and burned with strong desire
 To scale those heights sublime; but, as he gazed,
 Far stretched the intervening space, and higher
 Arose the heights. Now all the heavens blazed
 With brightness, till to blindness he was dazed.
 He paused in resolution—what to do
 In such emergency? His heart, amazed,
 A real plan or purpose barely knew,
 And as he longer looked, more fearful still he grew.

LXXII.

"Am I immortal? Onward, then!" he cried,
 And quickly to the mountain-base he drew;
 Then eagerly along its rugged side,
 O'er all opposing obstacles, he flew;
 Nor heeded he, although the tempest blew
 More fiercely now than ever. On he sped,
 Pride leading still the way where thunders flew
 On every side, around, beneath, o'erhead,
 Till e'en the earth below seemed tremulous with dread.

LXXIII.

The groaning mountain-sides were wrapped in smoke,
 And bellowing whirlwinds echoed far away,
 While from the gaping fissures of the rock
 Leaped fiery fiends, and hissed and howled as they
 Made sport awhile o'er their expected prey.
 Here Azan breathless paused, and glanced below,
 His awful situation to survey;
 When now those dreary fields of ice and snow
 In one vast stream of molten lava seemed to flow.

LXXIV.

Then passed before him such a presence dire—
 Formless, yet more symmetrical than form;
 Chilling, yet hotter than infernal fire;
 Serene, yet wilder than the wildest storm—
 As ne'er in fancy had a mortal worm
 Conceived. Transfixed with speechless fear he stood;
 And, while he could not move a foot or arm,
 And horror in his veins congealed his blood,
 A whisper in his inmost bosom said, "'T is God!"

LXXV.

“Heir of the ages!” said a voice sublime,
 “Born of eternal purpose ere the dawn
 Of the first day upon the flight of Time,
 Dare not forbidden ground to tread upon!
 Safe are the paths o’er which the past is gone,
 And in them thou inheritest a share
 Of all th’ eternal future yet unknown;
 To this, when Time is passed, thou shalt be heir;
 But, though immortal, as a mortal now beware!”

LXXVI.

The presence vanished; Azan looked again
 Upon the warring elements, which seemed
 To pause a moment with their noisy train,
 As that dread presence o’er their armies beamed.
 Far down the mountain-sides the lightnings gleamed
 O’er lava-torrents; above him, mounting higher,
 Though loud on every side the tempest screamed,
 Was Pride, who, in the face of hail and fire,
 Still called to him aloud to brave the perils dire.

LXXVII.

What doubts had come were not allowed to reign—
 Not now was it for him to hesitate:
 Back o’er the lava-floods to go were vain;
 A moment more, and it would be too late
 To snatch the scepter from an envious Fate.
 His guide was gaining ground, whate’er the odds;
 ’T was true, “the brave alone are fortunate,”
 And he who parleys while his reason plods
 Can never hope to win companionship with gods.

LXXVIII.

"I will!" now shouted Azan; and the roar
 Of the wild storm was hushed, and all was still,
 Till from the crags the echoes came once more,
 Like furies, shrieking out, "I will! I will!"
 From the red lava-flood, from toppling hill,
 Responsive mutterings answered to the screams
 Of the storm-fiends, who now, with plaintive trill,
 Caught up the murmur of the fiery streams, [gleams.
 Revealed along the crags by the fierce lightning's

LXXIX.

And now, with stunning crash, down rugged steeps,
 With gathering weight of avalanches hurled,
 To the dark caverns of the valleys sweeps
 The mingling fragments of that ruined world.
 O'er all, the banners of a god, unfurled,
 Wave proudly as on festal days; his car,
 Along the skies on wings of tempest whirled,
 Drives its red wheels, while, launching forth afar,
 Gleam his sky-rockets in the wild, weird shooting-star.

LXXX.

Now all is o'er—the train of Fortune fled,
 Their tinsel'd livery is cast away;
 Man has another fateful lesson read.
 And Azan and his guide—where, where are they?
 The storm is past, the beams of lightning play
 Fantastic freaks o'er the receding night;
 The low, faint murmurs fainter grow, till they
 Are hushed and still; uncertain gleams of light
 Reveal the ruin there—a pitiable sight!

LXXXI.

Here has the lightning left its scath, and there
 A bowlder huge has plowed; a noble tree,
 Uprooted from the mountain summit, where
 It stood the forest's pride, now shivered see
 Its leafy branches! what a strength to be
 Mocked by the greater, ere it can perform
 The mandate of all-ruling Destiny,
 Who must excite the earthquake and the storm
 To punish towering pride in man, a puny worm!

LXXXII.

There yawns a gulf, from which arose the fiend
 That piled the mountain masses, and beneath,
 Along the caverns dark that intervened,
 A passage opened to the shades of death;
 Here trickles water—hear it hiss and seethe
 O'er hot Plutonic rocks! there smokes a beam,
 Lit by the lightning, and fanned by the breath
 Of tempest. Here the struggling mountain stream
 Gurgles, and chokes, and swells: its waves no longer
 gleam

LXXXIII.

In crystal light—turbid it flows along;
 No playful minnows sport in it—the ear
 Is not arrested by its merry song,
 Nor that of birds that once collected there;
 Hoarse murmurs float out on the burdened air—
 The voice of rushing waters through the stones
 Is heard beneath the ground; all objects wear
 The mark of desolation, and the moans
 Of the receding storm are Beauty's dying groans.

LXXXIV.

'T was thus when on arousing Azan gazed
 In sadness o'er his wretched plight. Alas!
 He dreamed not, as his sorrowing eyes he raised,
 A well-known form before his face should pass.
 Around upon the ruined, shapeless mass
 He looked, and saw, with horror and surprise,
 The shadow of a figure as it was
 Long erst depicted in his memories: [spise.
 The guardian of his youth, whose words he dared de-

LXXXV.

"Time, Time! my patient, long-neglected sire!"
 Poor Azan cried; "O ever-pitying Time!
 Come, light again this life's expiring fire,
 And give me back my innocence and prime!
 No more shall Pleasure tempt to ease or crime;
 No more my graceless revelries displease;
 No more the dance or bacchanalian chime
 Shall shake my father's halls; or senseless Ease
 Protract the drowsy hours in sleep and lecheries."

LXXXVI.

Time turned his faded visage, and a frown
 Darkened his brow, as thus he made reply:
 "Who is it calls and would not live alone,
 Bereft of my unwelcome company?
 Who loves so well this scene of misery—
 This waste, where Desolation holds his reign;
 Where clouds obscure and thunders rend the sky;
 Where pleasure ends in want, and woe, and pain,
 And hope deserts the breast which Faith has wooed in
 vain?"

LXXXVII.

Poor Azan sighed. "What wouldst thou here with me?"
 Said the stern giant. "Childhood's happy days."
 "Where are they?" "Wasted." "Wasted let them be!
 I cannot from the past one moment raise."
 "Then from my mind their memory efface."
 "I am no murderer—not I—not I.
 I scourge the guilty, but I ne'er retrace
 My steps to gather up the lost supply
 Of joys neglected in the path I once passed by."

LXXXVIII.

"Then take me to my mother." "Where is she?"
 "Gone to the grave." "And was she true and kind?"
 "Far dearer was she than my life to me."
 "Then there is left *one* memory behind
 Thou wouldst not ever banish from thy mind.
 That one remaining, childhood's memories
 Around it in their richest clusters twined,
 Must live and grow, though manhood stoops and dies,
 And o'er his mold'ring clay as angels mount the skies."

LXXXIX.

"But here and now—what comfort may I seek?
 What aid from thee in present need implore?
 Canst thou a single word of solace speak
 As balm upon my heart with sorrow sore?"
 Time raised his eyes, and simply said, "No more!"
 "Then let the future to me be revealed;
 I'll give the past and all the present o'er,
 If thou wilt ope that world so long concealed,
 And let me know it all. O Time. in pity yield!"

XC.

“Behold!” said Time, “behold this dagger here!

The current of my life is sinking fast;

Thou hast with ruthless hand infix’d it there—

Why wouldst thou, then, recall the murdered past?

My warnings spurned, the punishment at last
Comes home; and, lo! the dark, insatiate grave,

From which Despair, on gloomy wing, makes haste
To guide thee to the dismal Stygian wave!

Accept him, and to me all farther trouble save.”

XCI.

Thus answered hoary Time, and sank beneath

The yawning earth, which closed again. Around
Were gathering now the shades of death.

Inclosing Azan in a night profound—

Beneath he heard a deep, sepulchral sound;

Then, all at once, Despair above his head

Stretched out his wings, and, pointing to the ground
Where Time had vanished, in his voice so dread
That Azan gasped with fear, thus to his culprit said:

XCII.

“At thy request I come: the lore I teach

Is not a prosy lecture, long and dry;

It is no sermon, yet I mean to preach

Truth that shall burn into the memory.

I shall not trouble thee with how and why,
But I will ask thee if thou e’er canst learn—

If all experience of the past must lie
Forgotten in thy heart. Then thou wilt spurn
My teachings, too, and to thy chosen ways return.

XCIII.

“But, come—no words—here is the pathway down;
 I’ve naught to tell beforehand—come and see.
 Bid nothing in the world adieu; though lone,
 And rough, and dismal here the road may be,
 ’T will be enough to have my company;
 And, since I teach in my peculiar way,
 Ask questions if thou wilt, but not too free
 Thy speech; but now there is no more delay;
 Down let us go—no time thy farewell now to say.”

XCIV.

Words, Azan saw, were useless; to review
 The past impossible; the will of Fate
 Denied, at parting, e’en a fond adieu
 To worlds receding—yes, it was too late.
 The world of darkness yawned insatiate;
 Death shook his ebon trident o’er the sea
 That drinks the waters of the stream of Hate,
 And the black waves came rolling sullenly
 Up from the dark abodes of endless misery.

XCV.

His heart, in such a dire catastrophe,
 Lost all the glow of love and friendship dear;
 For the full cup of his own misery
 Forbade to flow the sympathetic tear.
 On a familiar face no smile of cheer,
 Or welcome, breaks on meeting in that gloom;
 The eye is lusterless, and shadows there
 Hover as black as those o’er hopeless doom,
 Which smiles more hideous make, but never can illumine.

XCVI.

Here ages into moments crowd; the sea,
Lashed by the tempest off Spitzbergen's shore,
Leaps mid the jostling ice-crag, angrily,
Each billow breaking with a louder roar
Than that which mountain high had rolled before—
So from the misty caverns of that deep
Arose the waves, which, madly bellowing, bore
Some shipwrecked sprite that sought to scale the steep,
Away from time and hope, with none behind to weep.

XCVII.

One treads not leisurely, as he is wont
At eve to walk and watch the changing skies,
Where blushing twilight dallies with the mount
Which stretches up to kiss her as she flies,
And brushes dew-drops from her languid eyes;
But down, with headlong speed, to gulfs below
He plunges like the thunderbolt, while cries
Of wretched spirits and a lurid glow
Welcome his entrance to this dark abode of woe.

XCVIII.

And now they reached the shore: far thro' the gloom,
With seeming boundless sweep, the billows rolled,
Tossed by the blasts of pitiless simoom;
Deep called to deep, and dismal dirges tolled,
And answering wailings, sadder thousand-fold,
Rose from the dwellers in that dismal sea—
While ruins on the beach their dust and mold
Accumulated, never more to be
From this dark prison-house of desolation free.

XCIX.

And here were fossils, gems, engravings—*souvenirs*
 Of Nature in her ancient moral sphere,
 Heaped by the still decadency of years—
 Were scattered o'er the beach; here flashed a tear
 That dimmed a mother's eye—it fell, and here
 It crystallized; there lies a broken heart—
 Once flesh, now stone; the wave has stranded here
 An Ophir-laden ship, bound for the mart [impart?
 Of heaven. What knowledge, or what joy, can they

C.

“These are Time's treasures,” said Despair, “the toys
 God made for him when he was fair and young;
 But when full grown he longed for higher joys—
 These, in a fit of passion, down he flung.
 That harp which thou seest there is half unstrung,
 Yet, touched at times, gives harmony divine;
 But on these gloomy shores it long has hung,
 And naught can me, who own it now, incline
 To tune it up and wake the memories langsyne.”

CI.

“Didst purchase it of Time?” asked Azan. “No,”
 Replied Despair. “I purchase any thing!
 I am Time's bastard child, and trudging go
 Along his track, and like a vampire cling
 To every relic which a claim can bring
 To my inheritance; but envious law
 Rejects my suit, and, poor and suffering,
 I must content myself, and fill my maw [straw.”
 With what the pampered heir regards not worth a

CII.

“But these unhappy?” Azan’s pallid cheek
 And wild, dilated, vacant, staring eye
 Expressed the thought he could not fully speak.
 “Ay, they are my possessions, certainly—
 Half brothers, yet my slaves, those souls that cry,
 ‘Woe! woe!’ through all these lands, or lakes, of woe—
 Time’s lawful children thrown away to die;
 And for this purpose I behind him go—
 ’T were better to be mine than be deserted so.”

CIII.

“O Time!” shrieked Azan, wildly; and Despair
 Embraced him, breathing a sepulchral moan
 That shook those gloomy shores and smoky air,
 Till back, resounding from the farthest zone,
 Came the wild shriek and its responsive groan.
 The harp, which had so long neglected hung
 On this sad shore, awakened by the tone,
 Three times in concert back and forward swung,
 And twanged discordant with another chord unstrung.

CIV.

Then suddenly a shadowy form arose
 From the dark billows of the dreary sea;
 And as the *fatuus* o’er the darkness throws
 Its misty light in rays that seem to be
 The arms of ghosts that threaten angrily
 The way-worn traveler in the gloomy glen,
 So waved this specter’s arms as, rising, he
 Stalked for a moment o’er the waves, and then
 Vanished amid the shades, soon to appear again.

CV.

Though dim the outlines of this somber shade,
 They were distinct enough to tell of care;
 And every change of form or place displayed
 Some hideous wound inflicted by Despair;
 And many made by human hands were there—
 Some, old and festering, seemed to bleed anew,
 As now he seemed to catch a plaintive prayer
 From some one of those sorrowing spirits who
 Had parted from their friends ere they had said, Adieu!

CVI.

Long Azan watched the sprite—it rose, it fell,
 Or skimmed along the surface of the main;
 Now rode upon the burning ocean's swell;
 Now mounted on the sulphurous clouds again;
 Now brooding pensive o'er the desert plain
 Awhile it stood; then darting far away,
 It seemed hell's very terrors to disdain,
 And plunged in night, where not a single ray
 Of myriad, myriad suns would ever dare to stray.

CVII.

Then dropped a spell of wild enchantment round,
 And Azan's vision was no more the same;
 The past was all in black oblivion drowned,
 Save the dark memories of his former shame—
 These burnt within his bosom like a flame
 Which oceans could not quench. Before his eye
 A dismal ocean's billows went and came,
 O'er which from his tormentors he would fly
 To worlds yet unexplored in blank Futurity.

CVIII.

And now the cycles of Eternity
 Seemed to have started with their onward train;
 And Azan, launching with them o'er the sea,
 Sang, "Farewell, memories! lure me not again
 To Time's fair island in the boundless main."
 And now he heeded not the bitter prayer
 Extorted from the wretched, who in vain
 Filled all the ocean and the stifling air
 With all the piteous pleas of pitiless despair.

CIX.

Now planets, wandering through the realms of space,
 Far from their long-accustomed orbits broke;
 And systems lost their God-appointed place,
 Bursting and scattering like a cloud of smoke;
 From unknown graves the slumbering nations woke,
 Crowding together as if worlds below
 Anticipated some eventful stroke,
 Which none save those of spirit-land might know—
 Nor they beyond a vague and shadowy dread of woe.

CX.

Time's annals ceased to count revolving years,
 And days unnoticed in succession flew;
 On rolled the tide of misery and tears,
 And wider still the dismal ocean grew;
 Clouds, from those dreary skies of fiery hue,
 Dropped their hot rain-drops in the waves that boiled
 Beneath, while foul, contagious tempests blew
 O'er the dark realm; yet on the ages toiled,
 As though somewhere beyond a fadeless Eden smiled.

CXI.

For countless years behind a vista rose,
 As of a shadow grown through distance dim;
 When coming Night her deepening twilight throws
 O'er lands deserted by the day-king's beam,
 Or like unreal landscape of a dream,
 Where clouds and sunshine wood and field o'ercast
 With cots and castles, silver lake and stream,
 Then fade to nothing—so this dreary waste
 Revealed and hid again th' irrevocable Past.

CXII.

The mighty concourse of the judgment-day
 Seemed past forever; both the bad and just
 Had heard their doom; the broken mounds of clay
 Had lost their reinvigorated dust;
 Long buried relics from their mold and rust
 Had been unearthed, and back to earth consigned;
 Death had been true to his undying trust;
 And mind, associating now with mind,
 Had plunged into those seas, where dust is left behind.

CXIII.

Hell's hosts no longer with infernal pride
 Swept o'er the earth, engendering crime and woe,
 But with their sooty pinions far and wide
 Were sweeping downward still to worlds below;
 Angels no longer watched the ebb and flow
 Of vice and virtue in the human breast;
 For sin had met its final overthrow,
 And, in the golden mansions of the blest,
 Salvation won, the weary pilgrims were at rest.

CXIV.

The tender Graces, that had wept in grief
 O'er the impenitent, now wept no more;
 The wayward mariners had struck a reef
 Far out of sight of any friendly shore,
 Where piece by piece the ruthless breakers bore
 Mast, rudder, life-boat, o'er the raging deep,
 Until fierce monsters, with infernal roar,
 Had seized the helpless ship and, at a leap, [keep.
 Dragged her beneath the flood to their dark dungeon

CXV.

There were no circumstances now; no talk
 Of enterprises new, or failing trade;
 No bulls nor bears, nor watering of stock,
 Nor show of jewelry at masquerade;
 No strikes of working-men; no clubs to aid
 Bad men in carrying out their wicked schemes;
 No interviews with men whose traffic paid
 By being badgered in the prints; no themes
 On which philosophers spoil paper by the reams.

CXVI.

There were no cash transactions—days of grace
 With principal and notes were out of date;
 Indorsements were as worthless as the face,
 And order and acceptance had no weight,
 No matter when the time or what the rate.
 A more than Polar party was afloat,
 With no commission from an earthly state,
 Nor guiding iron-clad or jolly-boat,
 To pass through the ice and arctic seas remote.

CXVII.

But down the distances of agonies
 And aspirations stifled, where the tears
 Of grief unutterable sought for cries
 By which to tell their meaning to our ears,
 In the lost language of infernal spheres,
 One pale adventurer was setting sail—
 Not now to win applauding nations' cheers;
 Not now to gather walrus fat, or whale,
 And set his voyage off with many a wondrous tale.

CXVIII.

Nor hope, nor faith, nor missionary zeal,
 Swelled heart, or lighted eye, or fired his soul;
 No patriotic ardor did he feel
 Calling to country's rescue, for the roll
 Of honor had been hidden in a hole,
 Where once a servant hid his master's pound;
 No *Brabeutes* was stationed at the goal,
 To hail him as he drove his yacht around,
 And shout his name aloud as happy victor crowned.

CXIX.

But as an exile quits his native shore,
 Whence fell ingratitude has driven him,
 Shoves off his bark, and bends upon the oar,
 E'en while his streaming eyes with tears are dim—
 Cares not though now his boat may lightly skim,
 Or founder in the breakers, and his prayer
 Is "Welcome, deserts! welcome, monsters grim!
 Save in my land I greet you anywhere!"
 So Azan bent his course, in uttermost despair.

CXX.

Or, rather, as the corsair, when the sea
Is lashed to fury, and its foamy surge
Is lighted by the lightning, fitfully
Dancing o'er waves to ocean's wildest dirge,
Doth from his covert in the cave emerge
To range the sea for booty and for blood—
So Azan plunged through darkness from the verge
Of Time's last *Thule*, where he erst had stood
And uttered his wild cry across the boiling flood.

CXXI.

Though not for booty now was he so brave;
He was the runaway from Time and Care,
To whom apprenticed, feeling like a slave,
That for his freedom he would even dare
The greatest dangers and the hardest fare.
Thus he upon this dismal shore had come,
And found the only skipper was Despair
Who ever ventured o'er this sea to roam;
And he preferred this craft to Time and Care at home.

CXXII.

“Mount to the topmast! Steady!” and away
Through the black tempest sped the goblin ship:
Now plunging through a shower of fiery spray,
With sails and cordage cracking like a whip—
Now in a trough the reeling bark would dip,
While the red surge came sweeping o'er the deck;
But Azan grasped the mast with tighter grip,
And strove the beating of his heart to check,
For fear the daring vessel should become a wreck.

CXXIII.

Now on a billow rode the ship again,
 While Elmo's fire gleamed from the masts and spars,
 And fiery bubbles glowed all o'er the main—
 While all above were clouds of shooting-stars.
 The yards and cordage seemed like solid bars
 Of fire that hung aloft, but rose and fell,
 Or reeled and bounced, or trembled with the jars
 Of the wild ocean, whose majestic swell,
 Or chopping waves, might toss the goblin ship of hell.

CXXIV.

The lightnings wove a wreath around his head,
 And flung their streamers, like a necklace gay,
 Around his neck; and on the vessel sped;
 Huge sharks along its wake were seen at play,
 Or, hungry, hunting their expected prey;
 Down swooped the gulls, and, wildly screaming, perch'd
 Upon the pilot-house, or flew away,
 When now some shaft the smoking rigging smirched,
 Or in a heavy sea the ship abeam-ends lurched.

CXXV.

Then came a bird—a solitary bird—
 Azan had never seen its like before.
 He of the sacred albatross had heard,
 But ne'er had mariner from earthly shore
 Seen bird like this. Upon its head it bore
 A tuft of feathers, in a crescent-flame
 As blue as azure; on its breast it wore
 An amulet set in a burning frame,
 And on its folded wings, in lines of fire, its name.

CXXVI.

The eyes were blank; they neither glared with ire
 Nor melted into pity—dull and dim,
 They only gazed, but with a stare more dire
 Than e'en the deadly lightning's fiercest gleam
 They turned their stupefying orbs on him.
 The beak was hookèd as a sickle's blade;
 Its feet were made to seize on prey, or swim,
 Though its long legs in deepest bogs might wade,
 While its black tail, above, an inky shadow made.

CXXVII.

"Heigh-ho, my hearties!" sang the ship's wild crew;
 "Heigh-ho!" responsive rang the billow's roar;
 "Heigh-ho!" reëchoed Azan, wildly, too;
 But the strange bird its dusky feathers tore, [more!]
 And stretched its monster wings, and croaked, "No
 The echoes hushed, and Azan turned his eye,
 And sought to catch a glimpse of the far shore;
 But nothing save a speck could he desery,
 Just sinking in the sea beneath the leaden sky.

CXXVIII.

"Lay to!" halloed the captain, and still on
 Like lightning shot the ship. "What news aloft?"
 He called to Azan; but before the tone
 Had died away in echoes answering oft,
 There fell on Azan's ear a whisper soft,
 "A million leagues alee I see a shore,"
 And the wild crew in fierce derision scoffed;
 But the strange bird again its plumage tore, [more!]
 And flapped his gloomy wings, and simply said, "No

CXXIX.

Upon the prow still sat the gloomy bird;
 The crew on deck still hurried to and fro;
 On sped the ship, and now and then the word
 Of gruff command was answered by "Heigh-ho!"
 Azan at times was nearly letting go;
 But then a snatch of song so wild and new
 The chorus sang that he forgot his woe,
 And, answering to the voices of the crew,
 He shouted the refrain, as on the vessel flew.

CXXX.

Swifter the waters dashed along; the ship,
 Swinging and jumping, held its course along
 Faster than thought; now it would nearly dip,
 And Azan, on the high top-gallant, swung
 So near the billows that the monsters strong
 Leaped up to catch him; but with desperate clutch
 Still to the mast for very life he clung;
 For the fierce snapping of their teeth was such
 As made the blood congeal ere flesh had felt the touch.

CXXXI.

Then to the other side the topmast swung;
 Then righting, left a breathing spell; but he
 Looked o'er the ocean as he dashed along,
 To see if he could land descry allee.
 At last, he thought he made discovery
 Of a high point upon the distant shore;
 But ere he made it out a certainty,
 That strange, wild bird again his plumage tore,
 And spread his dusky wings, and screamed aloud, "No
 more!"

CXXXII.

And there he sat upon the vessel's prow,
 Stretching his wings till high above the mast
 And round o'er all the sea; and vision now
 To Azan was impossible. Yet fast
 The ship sped on; and now and then she passed
 Some strips of sea-weed; now and then an oar,
 Or floating cask; and now a boat, at last.
 Then Azan heard a most unearthly roar
 Of mingled noises, as the bird shrieked out, "No more!"

CXXXIII.

There was the sound of chains, of falling beams,
 Of tumbling bales of goods, and rattling drays;
 There were loud curses, moans, appalling screams,
 And heavy footsteps hurrying various ways;
 The calls of cabmen, porters, "Here's the place!"
 Then consciousness was gone: the horrid bird,
 The ship, its captain, and the frightful race
 Across the ocean—all had vanished; in a word,
 It was a calm that not one single breathing stirred.

CXXXIV.

And here my Muse drops anchor—she is now
 A little sea-sick, and she wants to rest.
 The trip has been a rough one, anyhow;
 And though in singing she has done her best,
 She might have done it better, had she guessed
 How much the people liked it. *Au revoir!*
 Sometime or other, just as you request,
 She may the portals of a world unbar,
 And tell what Azan anchored at this landing for.

CANTO THIRD.

I.

MUSE of heroic numbers, whom to woo
Mæonides the blind spent all his days,
Frown not upon thy humbler suitor, who
Perchance may seem to trifle with the bays;
And if I seem irreverent while I gaze
Upon and lightly speak of solemn things,
Turn not away disgusted. Come, and place
Thy tuneful fingers on the willing strings,
And bid us smile amid our black environings.

II.

Forsooth, thou wilt grow sad enough erelong
To make the gayest cease his mirth and weep,
When thou shalt lead us in the path of song
Along the alleys of the lower deep.
But now descend from off Parnassus' steep,
And loiter with me in the plain below;
Nor ask the blind Mæonides to keep
Our company, unless he choose to go;
Nor Milton, if it suit him rather to say, No.

III.

Thou hast the storm, the earthquake, and the fire,
The field, the flood, the mountain, and the vale,
Sung in befitting strain upon my lyre,
To give enchantment to my drowsy tale.
Now let not my vocabulary fail
Just when I need it most; for still I fear
To give the favoring winds too full a sail,
Deeming the danger past, the harbor near; [clear.
Most gallant ships have sunk when all was bright and

IV.

Hell is my theme. What is it? where? and when
 Shall we get there? Is it a black abyss,
 Where furies feed on miserable men?
 Is it a lake, where billows foam and hiss?
 Or is it not a world akin to this?
 Its good extracted, and its bad made worse;
 Its capital a vast metropolis,
 That keeps its jockey-club and pony-purse,
 To bet on human races, and—the poet's verse?

V.

What are its laws? for laws it surely has.
 How can an anarchy rule? But hold! we go
 Too deeply into metaphysics. Pass
 Such questions to divines who claim to know.
 Discussions here are frivolous, and O
 How frivolous, when we regard the case
 Of those who languish in that world of woe!
 But still I think it right to grant a space
 To some new features of this interesting place!

VI.

All are agreed that it is downward, and
 Completely land-locked; I'll not stop to quote
 Authorities, so many are at hand.
 Homer and Virgil, in an age remote,
 And, later, Dante and John Milton, wrote;
 Besides, the great apocalyptic seer—
 All these, and many more of minor note.
 But on one point I find they differ here—
 'Tis whether the locality is far or near.

VII.

Think me not trifling, I again beseech,
 When thus so careless I may seem to sing;
 'Tis not exclamatory parts of speech
 That always strike the heart's most tender string.
 Tears drop as dew, e'en when a cherub's wing
 Wafts smiles across our faces; so we do
 Not always feel the saddest o'er the thing
 We shed most tears at. Ah! it is too true,
 We smile to hide the woes which most we fear to view.

VIII.

'Tis not in generalities that we
 Make strong appeals; for what do people care
 About a country far across the sea,
 If it is only stated it is there?
 What is it good for? Is it foul, or fair?
 Barren, or fertile? Has it hills, or plains?
 Do marshes breathe a pestilential air?
 Or has it deserts, where it never rains?
 Or has it mines of gold in never-failing veins?

IX.

Do harbors safe indent its shores? Do rivers
 Run wide and deep where merchantmen may ply?
 And are the people living there good livers,
 And bred to rules of good society?
 Is there a little more variety
 In dress, or entertainment, or pursuits?
 How old do people grow before they die?
 Or do they die at all? Tell how it suits
 For one who raises bees and all the kinds of fruits.

X.

Has not creative Wisdom merely given
The samples of his good and evil here?
Are not earth's beauties but some gleams of heaven,
Borne on the sunlight through the ether clear?
Are not its sorrows but the pioneer
Throes of an Erebus, so dark and wild
That, though at times the earth like hell appear,
Its blackest night has changed to morn, and smiled
Upon the real woes of hell's unhappy child?

XI.

But to be told that one is going there—
What for? A question plain and practical
Is forced upon us. Many ills we bear
Yield pleasure to us even while they gail,
And many pleasures fail to please at all
When we have once enjoyed them; hence, in vain
Upon our fellow-men we often call
To go to heaven, and bitterly complain
That they prefer the road to hell, with all its pain.

XII.

"Hell is a hole, where men are cooked by steam,"
Is many a preacher's sermon boiled to jelly.
"Heaven is an ice-house, where the richest cream
Will soothe the appetite and cool the belly."
Then he exhorts us, "Hell is *very* helly,
And heaven's as heavenly as you ever saw;
And you had better go to heaven, I tell ye,
Or hell will get you, bones and all, blood raw, [maw."
And on them, when they're cooked, the Devil fill his

XIII.

And then we often hear of safe deposit
 In savings banks beyond the rolling sea,
 And goodly ship to take us all across it,
 And set us down upon a shore where we
 Will clap our hands and shout eternally;
 As if the hands were only made to clap,
 And all the members, save our lungs, would be
 Like all the outside of a rattle-trap,
 Handles to hold by, or the parts on which to tap!

XIV.

Ah! guide us, Wisdom, as we steer between
 Two boundless continents in endless war;
 Ope on our eyes at times the glorious scene
 O'er whose bright foreground comes no cloud to mar,
 And teach the hardy mariner to scan afar
 The hostile ship, as now it heaves in sight;
 Save him from gliding on the faithless bar,
 Or striking on the rock where, wrecked outright,
 He and his merchandise go down in endless night.

XV.

What profit still, though all his merchandise
 From his wrecked vessel, and himself along,
 Be brought ashore, where they become the prize
 Of wreckers who upon this ocean throng?
 Too late for Heaven to repair the wrong,
 By bidding hell surrender then its dead; •
 Too late to bind in fetters doubly strong
 The harpies that upon his carcass fed,
 Or break the pirate's sword that split his luckless head.

XVI.

Too many superficial coast surveys
 Have caused the loss of bark and argosy
 Whose hopeful owners launched them o'er the ways,
 Trusting their fortunes to a lucky die.
 Now buried under raging waves they lie,
 Or, stranded on some desolated beach,
 They lift their broken spars as if to cry
 To gallant masts that float far out of reach,
 And by their hopeless wrecks most eloquently preach:

XVII.

"Ye pilots heavenward, come to hell awhile,
 And map it out, with all its dangerous reefs,
 And ye shall be rewarded for your toil
 With certainties instead of blind beliefs.
 Let lawyers quit awhile their bills and briefs,
 And take some practice in the courts of hell,
 In order to correct its countless griefs."
 But who is going? who the way can tell
 To place whose picture suits the human heart so well?

XVIII.

We say the picture—the reality
 Is somewhere else—God only knows, I ween,
 Exactly where is the locality.
 Perhaps no angel eye has ever seen
 More than its outskirts, wide as may have been
 His flight, and brave as may have been his heart;
 And though he may have had an eye so keen
 That it might through the midnight shadows dart,
 Yet, finite at the best, it only saw a part.

XIX.

Weird miniature! what wondrous skill we see
 Through all the finer outlines there displayed!
 Whoever studies it will always be
 A thousand-fold for all his toil repaid,
 And reach a port where wrecks are never made;
 But should he turn his knowledge to ill use,
 He opes a cage of birds that should have stayed
 Forever caged, and turns the demons loose
 That otherwise would know no land but Tartarus.

XX.

Through what successive eras man has passed,
 Accumulating rubbish! Higher, higher,
 And higher yet, he piles it, till at last
 The way to heaven, he thinks, is growing nigher;
 He takes surveys, and gravely stretches wire,
 By which to send Jehovah messages,
 Thereby to show a laudable desire
 For social complaisance, and then to press
 His plans to make the fare across the ocean less.

XXI.

And why should such a project not succeed?
 For 't is a fact, which candor must allow,
 That heaven is, most undoubtedly, in need
 Of thorough scientific men, just now.
 The present class are subsidized below;
 Besides, their teachers are already there,
 And they are bound, through courtesy, to show
 Some preference for the Devil, and to spare
 Themselves the learned snubs they otherwise must bear.

XXII.

But should old Zion's craft reduce its fare,
 And offer larger bounties in advance,
 The Germans soon would have an agent there;
 And all the zealous infidels of France
 Would think it was a very lucky chance
 Of taking up a portion of the lands.

The Chinaman would also purchase grants
 Where now he only modestly demands
 To cook a Christian's bread, and wash his holy hands.

XXIII.

Besides, 't is readily admitted that
 The boorish pioneers already there
 Would pay for cultivation, which is at
 So low an ebb for want of proper care.
 First grades of intellect have been so rare
 That science offers it a field untried;
 Philosophers who could not split a hair
 And half the difference of the halves divide
 Have been the only class that e'er were on that side.

XXIV.

But it is not to heaven's glorious skies,
 Its fertile soil, and clime salubrious,
 That I at present would direct your eyes,
 But on that world with earth conterminous.
 Inventions there, *quæ prosunt omnibus*,
 Show that the arts develop rapidly;
 And, bating some of its calamitous
 Occurrences, we know no reason why
 It may not be a pleasant country, by and by.

XXV.

Its shrewd inhabitants have made the most
 Of every thing that niggard land supplies,
 And, certainly, they have a right to boast
 Their triumphs won by native energies.
 Bœotian fogs once hung above these skies,
 But Titan intellects did soon assert
 Their power in vanquishing necessities;
 And Nature, that malignant malapert,
 Now owns, at last, the mind superior to dirt.

XXVI.

What is more splendid, in that mountain town,
 Yclept by saints the New Jerusalem,
 Although it shimmers 'neath a cloudless sun,
 And boasts its walls and gates of purest gem?
 Hell has its way of imitating them;
 And lo, its streets sufficient proof of this!
 Its ruler wears as proud a diadem
 As ever glittered in a land of bliss,
 And full as gorgeous robes of royalty are his.

XXVII.

Look at its public buildings—they attest
 No spell lethargic o'er immortal mind;
 Compare them with the one on Zion's crest,
 And, after due examination, find
 That in magnificence they're not behind.
 Heaven's treasury was spent on one—a price
 That would have built a dozen of its kind,
 Where you may see the domes along the skies,
 As thick as Athens swarmed with minor deities.

XXVIII.

The first that you behold is Mammon's Hall—
 Not merely gilt—'t is built of solid gold;
 Next him we see the house of Belial,
 Which seen, we do not wonder to be told
 What sway o'er men and women he doth hold;
 Then Moloch, Lucifer, Beelzebub,
 And myriads of others, known of old
 By country residences on our globe,
 Here prove their wealth was such as ages could not rob.

XXIX.

'T were useless to enumerate, or dwell
 At length upon their splendor; so we pass
 On to the quays—the business part of hell;
 For be assured this thriving empire has
 An eye to business, which, too much, alas!
 The other lacks. Here ships from every clime
 Pour out their merchandise, until the mass
 Which they bring over promises, in time,
 Above these murky skies to tower to heaven sublime.

XXX.

There rides a gallant merchantman; a king
 In that brought o'er his household goods and gods—
 A lucky prince! he landed every thing
 Safe o'er the seas, and, anchored in the roads,
 The ship lies waiting other precious loads.
 See yonder iron-clad, whose heavy guns
 Once hurled destruction over crimson floods!
 Her commodore is here, and Pluto's sons
 Write his heroic name among the mighty ones.

XXXI.

That squadron, lying out upon the bay,
 Was launched upon the wave ere Noah's ark
 Sprouted from acorns—not to name the day
 When Jason sailed for Colchis in his bark—
 Yet Time has failed to make the slightest mark
 Upon their brazen keels. The rotten raft
 On Ararat is like the patriarch
 Who left it there; and Jason and his craft
 No longer bid the breeze to golden fleeces waft.

XXXII.

But these have still their stately bearing kept
 Where floods above the wreck of empires rolled;
 On through the ages they unscathed have swept,
 While human deeds have sunk to dust and mold.
 This fleet was fitted out in days of old,
 When Moloch counseled storming heaven again;
 But ere the expedition started, bold
 As were hell's warriors, it was voted vain
 To trust their strongest forces to the treacherous main.

XXXIII.

For should they be so lucky as to reach
 The port of heaven, and join in battle dire,
 They might be cast upon a hostile beach,
 There to remain; they might be set on fire,
 And, ere from close array they could retire,
 The crew be added to the fearful loss.
 But, though they ceased to heaven to aspire,
 Moloch turned o'er his fleet to Atropos,
 And gave to Charon one to ferry men across.

XXXIV.

The other ships were not allowed to rest
 And rot in idleness; for prizes great
 Their practical efficiency attest
 In executing the behests of State.
 They constantly are cruising, and of late
 A fleet of merchantmen, with weak convoy,
 Was seized by them in sight of heaven's gate;
 And if off duty here, they find employ
 In picking up the wrecks which wind and wave destroy.

XXXV.

But nautical narrations are too long,
 The feats too numerous and tragical,
 To be recounted in a passing song,
 Which only aims to mention some of all.
 Their dismal deeds have left their cursèd pall
 O'er every land on this terrestrial ball,
 And on its azure deeps the crimson line
 Repeats the story of their fatal thrall;
 Earth sickens under influence where shine
 Their baleful stars so oft o'er fields incarnadine.

XXXVI.

But hold, my Muse! let Azan tell his tale—
 Well-nigh have we forgotten him, and spent
 An hour in rambling through this gloomy vale,
 Without inquiring where our hero went.
 We left him in unconsciousness, and sent
 Our friends away, with promises to tell
 Some more about him, should no fate prevent;
 And, since he has awakened from that spell,
 By honor bound, we must relate what next befell.

XXXVII.

Some time elapsed—how long 't were hard to guess,
 For means of marking time below are few—
 Ere Azan came again to consciousness;
 And how it was he ne'er exactly knew;
 But he was in a hospital. A blue
 And flick'ring lantern over him was hung,
 And some one—he was rather doubtful who—
 Was pouring nitric acid on his tongue,
 And sticking pins in him, and asking if they stung.

XXXVIII.

Azan had never studied medicine
 Enough to side with allopaths, or say
 That he preferred the other. He was in
 No mood to give decision right away;
 And prudently adjourned without delay.
 So, running to a window, out he went;
 But this was hardly better than to stay
 Inside; for he perceived by the event
 'T was half a mile, exactly, vertical descent.

XXXIX.

He fell upon a pavement all afire,
 But hard as flint. He was a little stunned;
 And just as he was going to inquire
 Which way to go, a full caparisoned
Gen d'arme was at his side. He would have shunned
 Encounter with the guard, but it was vain.
 "You must contribute to the city fund
 For striking fire upon the street, on pain
 Of being sent to prison, and there a year remain."

XL.

Thus said the officer. Here was a case
 Which Azan hardly felt he could escape.
 A blank expression came across his face;
 For matters seemed to take an uglier shape,
 The more he thought of getting out the scrape.
 What could he pay? for he was penniless:
 But now his captor took a strip of tape
 To measure him, and he began to guess
 What meant the *gen d'arme's* hint in going to duress.

XLI.

, Then, having measured him, the *gen d'arme* said:
 "You are a foreigner; you come to look
 Around our city; tell me what has led
 You thus to choose?" Then Azan courage took,
 And told why he old Time and Care forsook,
 And came across the ocean with Despair.
 Thereat the *gen d'arme* drew a little book
 Out of his pocket, noted all with care,
 And, handing him a slip, said, "Take this bill of fare."

XLII.

"City Hotel!" rang out in Azan's ear,
 And, glad of his escape, he turned away.
 The omnibus for him was waiting near,
 And, jumping into it, without delay
 We follow him where he shall dine to-day.
 A little late, but we our minds prepare
 To see the sights—*en passant*, let me say
 Azan expects to meet acquaintance there;
 For grim Despair will fill th' infernal bill of fare.

XLIII.

I see objections in your countenance,
 Because he's black—'t is no objection here.
 They would not change him, if they had the chance;
 For black, if any thing, they all prefer.
 Come, let us look upon the register:
 Perhaps there are some neighbors here of mine,
 And yours; some of them started many a year
 Ago, and we may have the luck to dine
 With them, and talk an hour of memories langsyne.

XLIV.

And now into the dining-hall we go:
 O what a dinner! what a company!
 What countenances big with speechless woe!
 What gulping whole the crudities that lie
 In sickening *mélange* before the eye!
 See! the dyspeptic *gourmands* never raise
 Their eyes to greet a friend or passer-by.
 They eat the garbage of their former days,
 Which ne'er the foul, perverted appetite allays.

XLV.

There sits a quondam judge, in sooty wig,
 Devouring his soiled ermine, boiled in tears
 Shed o'er the convict's grave he helped to dig;
 There sits the murderer of golden years,
 Gorging his youthful crimes and long arrears
 To Time—how vomits he his vain regrets!
 That politician feeds on hollow cheers;
 That miser chews a quid of worthless debts;
 That soldier gets his fill of guns and bayonets.

XLVI.

Look at that priest at his confessional—

What godly guise! and that abandoned trull,
On whom he leers, and dares on her to call

The benisons of Heaven! Gorge to the full,

Ye who have dared the nuptial bond annul!

Damnation's tables never can afford

Too damnable a dish for such as pull

The jewels from the ephod of the Lord,

To satisfy their lusts and mock his sacred word.

XLVII.

There sits he, in torn surplice—Heaven forefend

That ever we again such sight may see!—

Eating whole liturgies, that now descend

Sweet o'er the palate, but most bitterly

Prey on the vitals. Let us turn and flee

This scene, and rather let us starving go

Back on the raging billows of the sea,

And bid its fiercest fiery tempests blow,

Than longer linger in this dining-hall of woe.

XLVIII.

Sick at the sight, as Azan turns away

He hears a call from some one sitting near;

He turns, and recognizes, in dismay,

The boon companion of a former year.

“Good lackaday!” exclaimed the fiend; “see here,

What news have you of friends on earth to tell?

Yourself have shown yourself exceeding queer,

For having kept an ancient promise—well!

'T is something new for one to keep his word in hell.

XLIX.

“Sit down, and let us talk of former days;
 Despair will furnish us with drinks for two—
 A draught such as, when filleted with bays,
 From those old casks of thine we often drew.
 Come, do not hurry; we have naught to do
 With hurrying Time—so we at ease may be
 To sit, and sip, and talk, the ages through;
 For now a thousand years will seem to me
 Too short a time to drink one glass to memory.

L.

“Despair has some of our first vintage here,
 Sealed up and locked away against to-day;
 It has been growing mellow many a year,
 And now I long to tear the seal away.
 Ho, caterer of hell! without delay
 Bring out your wines. The oldest there—make haste!
 Away, you tardy valet, and obey!
 And do not let the precious moments waste,
 While I am famishing the good old wine to taste.”

LI.

Despair went off to bring the drink; the fiend
 Talked on incessantly of him and wine.
 It must be good—the vintage had been gleaned
 So early and so well. ’Twas surely fine;
 Despair would scarce a glass of it decline.
 Now here he came, a basket full of old
 And dusty bottles bringing. “’Tis the sign
 Of royal drink”—the fiend could hardly hold
 Still, as Despair from side to side the bottles rolled.

LII.

While this was going on, poor Azan stood
 And gazed upon the couple timidly:
 The fiend kept prating on, in maddest mood,
 Of long protracted years of revelry;
 Despair kept setting all the bottles by,
 And saying something to himself as each
 Was brushed, and passed the closest scrutiny,
 And then was set away just out of reach
 Of the wild fiend that now in rage began to screech.

LIII.

At last the bottles all were set aside;
 And Azan breathed a sigh of blest relief,
 As grim Despair the raving fiend denied
 A drink of wine and conversation brief.
 Thus all the hopes of pleasure came to grief,
 And like a felon, dropping down his head,
 The fiend began: "Another plate of beef—
 The ox which my companion's father fed,
 And graced the table of his son when he was dead.

LIV.

Despair went off again. "Now," said the fiend,
 "Is coming something that your fast will break:
 I pray you do not be at all chagrined
 That I have ordered you a piece of steak,
 Which you before the glass of wine must take."
 Despair came back, and gravely shook his head;
 And taking up the jars, gave each a shake,
 Setting them in the basket as he said,
 "Not ready yet." Then o'er the board a veil he spread.

LV.

And then he turned to Azan, and began:

“Youth, there is something in your face which bears
A strong resemblance to a certain man

That crossed the sea with me some hundred years

Ago. Are you the same? Well, it appears

That I am slightly in your debt. You need

Not fear that I will settle my arrears;

And if you wish to travel more, proceed [lead.”

With this man as your guide. Come, sirrah, take the

LVI.

He turned away, and to his cellar bore

The enigmatic jars. When left alone

With his companion, he proposed, once more,

The dismal dining-hall to look upon.

The guests had finished eating, and were gone;

The tables covered, and the chairs reversed;

Dark figures glided here and there, but none

Spoke to another, till a sudden burst

Of rage in Azan's friend, who thus the keeper cursed:

LVII.

“Particular, indeed! my patience here must end—

Most miserably damned of all the damned—

To keep the wine and food for which I send,

And but to have it in his stomach crammed!

But come along; I have a project framed

That will make up for loss of meats and drinks,

For which, you know, he only must be blamed.

An old and selfish hypocrite! he thinks

I cannot pay my debts. Hell, out upon the sphinx!

LVIII.

"Come, let us walk along the busy streets
 Of this far-heralded metropolis;
 Though disappointed in our drinks and meats,
 Sight-seeing in as great a place as this
 Is worth a fast; and if you have to miss
 The one or other, always choose to fast.
 New wonders, daily bursting on the eyes,
 Forbid your ever coming to the last, [you have passed.
 Though mem'ry should break down with those which

LIX.

"But hold! Why should I use deception now?
 I will not. Yet, while in my company
 Amid the crowd, and I say so and so,
 Admit it all, though but a flimsy lie
 To hide the truth from some infernal spy.
 'Tis treason for a subject to declare
 That all hell's splendors are but vanity,
 Or tenfold worse; each citizen must swear
 That great is hell and its black Boniface, Despair.

LX.

"But when alone, my thoughts shall freely flow;
 Use your own eyes till then, and only hear
 To prove how far the rankest falsehoods go
 A country's greatness or renown to rear.
 Come, then, nor let us longer tarry where
 No sights are seen. Ho for the Treasury!"
 He ceased, and left the mansion of Despair;
 Behind him Azan followed, till his eye
 In mute astonishment gazed up toward the sky.

LXI.

There stood a pile to which St. Peter's dome
 Was but a toy-house, and with rooms so great
 That the vast amphitheater of Rome
 Would hardly make a cloak-room. At the gate—
 Of which no dozen bars could hold the weight,
 Though large as those that link opposing shores,
 O'er which the engine drags its ponderous freight—
 Stood Azan waiting, till its mighty doors
 Were opened, and he walked along the marble floors.

LXII.

This was the Treasury Department. Here the bonds
 Are issued and accepted by the score,
 For which the purchaser deposits funds
 To be refunded when the war is o'er
 Now going on with heaven, but not before.
 Close by, the Royal Mint you may descry,
 From which the coins continually pour
 That would a passage into heaven buy,
 Could they but pass the test of God's all-searching eye.

LXIII.

Fair imitations of the heavenly coin
 Are they; and here the pearl of greatest price
 Might tempt a true believer to purloin
 And sell a part of heaven's merchandise—
 Such power has it to enchain the eyes.
 See, on one side, a string of holy beads
 And crucifix; a book of homilies
 Upon the other, which a pilgrim reads,
 While toward the holy city he devoutly treads.

LXVII.

A wholesale dealer in immortal wares—
 What would you of his stock? A broken heart?
 We get them up the second flight of stairs,
 Paired off and labeled with consummate art.
 The business pays, and ere you home depart,
 Ask what the price is—it is surely small;
 Order a thousand to some earthly mart,
 And make a fortune at one lucky haul.
 Go largely in the trade, or do not go at all.

LXVIII.

Perhaps a happy father might esteem
 A family group; then he will never find
 A better or a more suggestive theme
 To wake reflection in the human mind
 Than those for sale here—scores of every kind:
 The ragged and the gaudy, rich and poor,
 The base and noble. If you feel inclined
 To traffic and grow rich, and nothing more,
 Of every thing be sure to lay in ample store.

LXIX.

Ah! how these showy outsides hide within
 The foulness of a charnel-house! The eye
 May look beyond and see the blackest sin
 That blots the annals of humanity.
 Ye simple, count the cost before you buy;
 Buy not, until you have inspected well
 The fatal goods that now before you lie;
 And know, no matter how you buy or sell,
 'Tis but poor pay to be the richest man in hell.

LXX.

But from the Mint, the stalls, and offices,
 On to the War Department let us pass.
 Here we behold all styles of martial dress,
 As well as an incalculable mass
 Of mail and enginery of death. Alas!
 Here are the wreaths for which, through bloody sweat,
 Earth's conquerors toiled, and whom it ever has
 Applauded as its benefactors; yet
 Earth could afford to lose their names without regret.

LXXI.

The arms of conquered and of conquerors
 Together hang upon the self-same hook;
 And the hoarse trumpet now no longer roars
 The name of him whose conquering engines shook
 Down walls of cities, which their gods forsook.
 But let us hasten, though we fain would stay,
 And on the rusty arms of heroes look;
 But, as we through the picture-gallery stray,
 Look on these dingy faces, and in candor say

LXXII.

If Jove appears to shake his dewy curls
 Where that young Macedonian displays
 His trophies to the Babylonish girls,
 And doffs his armor for the bacchant's bays.
 Ask of that picture if the hand can raise
 The sword Achilles wielded when at Troy;
 Ask Cesar if the conquered Briton pays
 Him tribute here; or ask that pensive boy
 If Egypt's ruins still his idle hours employ.

LXXIII.

But shall we linger where they hang in state?
 How false the picture that we look upon!
 We think, when we behold the proud and great,
 The key to history's secret throes is won.
 But who by these knows what was Macedon?
 What Greece from those? or what the speechless woes
 Rome felt in Cesar's day? or what was done
 To make an agitated world repose,
 When France gave up her chief to satisfy her foes?

LXXIV.

But can we turn from these, so empty all,
 To those which have no kind of covering?
 If by the great deceived, we leave the small,
 Sick at the sight of such ungainly thing.
 O Muse! mount upward on a bolder wing;
 Reared in a healthful mountain atmosphere,
 Oppressed and weak, thou hast no heart to sing
 Amid the vapors that surround thee here.
 Then seek thy mount again, and sing of Azan there.

LXXV.

Through crowded thoroughfares and narrow lanes
 By his attendant fiend was Azan led.
 They walked deliberately through the fanes,
 And on their walls obscure inscriptions read.
 They then the meaner portions visited;
 Saw all—and 'twas enough to satisfy
 The wildest cravings of the heart or head—
 And then, ascending to a hill near by,
 They viewed the dismal realm spread out before the eye.

LXXVI.

There long in silence from the hill they gazed
O'er all the scene—a dread, bewildering sight!
Far to the left a fiery ocean blazed,
Whose farther boundary was lost in night;
The city of the damned lay on the right;
Behind it stretched the plain on which it stood—
This was the picture of eternal blight,
Where not a sprig of grass, or growing wood,
Or placid stream, or lake, relieved the solitude.

LXXVII.

Beyond the plain, in dingy distance rose
A barren chain of mountains, which were crowned
With leaden clouds and everlasting snows,
That cast a gloom more awfully profound
O'er all the uninviting plain around.
Some were volcanic, and their baleful light
Seemed signaling to others far beyond,
That hurled their blazing cinders to a height
That made them seem as meteors in the sky of night.

LXXVIII.

Hot streams came gurgling from the mountain sides,
And lost themselves among the sandy plains;
Though sometimes swollen into floods, their tides
Came foaming, bellowing on to meet the main's.
At times the lava coursed in fiery veins
Between stupendous cliffs, or formed in lakes,
O'er which innumerable gulls and cranes [and snakes
Flapped their broad wings and screamed, while frogs
Leaped, croaked, and crawled and hissed, amid the
tangled brakes.

LXXIX.

Towns, cities, villages, upon this plain,
 Seemed, at the distance whence they were surveyed,
 The evidences of a prosperous reign;
 But close inspection showed the walls decayed,
 And rotten roofs, where poisonous serpents played.
 Unutterable squalor reigned within;
 For on the ruined property was laid
 Such heavy tax, to pay the cost of sin,
 That to repair his home none ever dared begin.

LXXX.

The owners sometimes sauntered moodily
 Out of their doors; but when they cast their eyes
 Upon the gloomy prospect, with a sigh
 They sought their rooms, and chose their miseries
 Rather than cursèd, unpropitious skies
 That frowned upon a desolated soil,
 Blighted and groaning under tyrannies,
 Conspiring every hope and plan to foil,
 And rearing thrones of pride o'er unrequited toil.

LXXXI.

Long was the silence, but the spirit broke
 The spell at last: "What thoughts thy heart engage,
 That thus in silent wonder thou dost look
 Upon these scenes—the picture of an age
 Which shines in light on history's gilded page?
 Here is reality, of which vain man
 Has written, talked, and blundered, like a sage,
 Who guessed at what he saw, and, breathless, ran
 To make posterity admire and guess again.

LXXXII.

"The records here are not in dusty books,
 Nor sealed like those which heaven's recorder bears,
 Nor hid away in solitary nooks,
 Where, day by day, the pale-faced student wears
 His life away amid forgotten years.
 Here we can stand, and read from riven rocks
 And desert plains—the only registers
 That bid defiance to the fiend that knocks
 Man's types all down, and at his hopeless sorrow mocks

LXXXIII.

"Thou hast from Nature read—and she has traced
 As lofty characters for men as they
 Can bear to read; but what are mountains massed,
 Or plains extended, or the watery way
 Where Neptune holds his court, while monsters play
 Around his nursery? The wizard, Time,
 Comes tripping nimbly on, and cries, 'To-day
 Your towers may seem to kiss the skies sublime,
 To-morrow they shall rot with you in dust and slime!'

LXXXIV.

"But not so here; the words 't'is written' stand
 Without recension; no imperfect line
 Requires a learnèd commentator's hand
 To trace the import of the words divine.
 'Tis written. Read; the privilege is thine
 To read what will not compliment thy wit,
 By showing doubtful meaning or design,
 One dogma or its opposite to fit;
 But there it stands in fire, and what is writ is writ.

LXXXV.

“Turn now thine eye to yonder beetling cliff:
 Behold a gilded temple on its crest;
 Its founder’s expectations came to grief
 Long ere life’s sun descended in the west.
 On earth he counted to be famed and blest;
 And at the midnight hour he toiled alone,
 To rear a dome where he when old might rest,
 And view the sun long after he had gone
 Away to other lands, while night spread o’er his own.

LXXXVI.

“He toiled in books; he visited the mart
 Where titles can be bought; he bore away
 All that he fancied, but, with heavy heart,
 Longed for the dawning of the happy day
 When joy should all his diligence repay.
 For this he courted all the great of earth,
 Showed them his goods, and asked them oft to say
 How much they thought his acquisitions worth. [birth?
 Was not the land renowned which claimed to give him

LXXXVII.

“He warred; gave laws and customs wise to men;
 Gave festivals to dry the widows’ tears
 Which his ambition caused to flow; and when
 Grown weary with accumulating years,
 And of the future having still some fears,
 He donned Religion’s robes, repeated psalms,
 Gave half his time to penance and to prayers;
 Gave half his fortune to the poor in alms,
 And drank of men’s applause to ease his guilty qualms.

LXXXVIII.

"Men praised; but, sick of praise, at last he died,
 Willing the world his plans and charts; and here
 He found this tenement unoccupied,
 Though, like the one he sought on earth to rear,
 'T was empty quite of all his titles dear.
 More sad to be thus mocked, the restless sprite
 Returned a wanderer to his native sphere,
 To mock his race with visions of delight,
 And bid them spend their days in toiling up the height.

LXXXIX.

"This wandering impostor has a name,
 But it is buried in a nameless tomb;
 Yet he is deified on earth as Fame—
 A goddess clothed in youth's eternal bloom,
 Who bids the noble to her temple come,
 And she will there reward them for their pains.
 How eagerly do they the task assume,
 Leaving behind their smiling native plains, [reigns!
 To climb the mountain-top where this fair goddess

XC.

"How steep the way o'er which the fools ascend!
 What expectation flashes from their eyes!
 Upward, with overweening hearts, they wend
 Their weary way to Folly's paradise.
 Scores lose their footing on the road, to rise
 No more; yet still their comrades onward toil,
 To grasp the semblance of realities
 In gloss of reputation, and the spoil [soil.
 Which feeds a growth of plants that know no sacred

XCI.

“Behold! the smiling goddess opes the gate
 And beckons to a favored visitant;
 He enters—writes his name among the great.
 How rings the hall with music jubilant!
 How doth the new-made heir of Honor flaunt
 Himself, encircled by the sacred bays!
 Crowds gather round him, and impatient pant
 To hide their envy under hollow praise,
 Till in the infected air his glorious crown decays.

XCII.

“Now to the inner courts another treads,
 And looks aloft the goddess fair to woo;
 She upward o’er the dizzy stair-way leads,
 And he with reckless ardor doth pursue,
 Till from the topmost step he stops to view
 The crowds below, who envy him his lot;
 Again looks up—his goddess mounts the blue
 Ethereal; his soul is to a frenzy wrought;
 He leaps, falls, perishes; and now he lies forgot.

XCIII.

“For lo! a stream flows at the mountain’s base,
 Whose sullen waters seek the boundless sea
 That stretches yonder through the misty space;
 Yet fools are asking, ‘What is that to me?’
 ’Tis Time’s child—yet unborn—Futurity.
 Man from the earth, an emanation, springs
 To woo Time’s grandchild, which may never be
 A child; yet still he soars on waxen wings,
 And to his love unborn his ardent passion sings.

XCIV.

"He, in his sonnets to Dame Future's child,
 Abuses Time, who pettishly defers
 The happy moments when his visions wild
 Will find fulfillment, and revolving years
 Shall bind his growing fortune fast to hers;
 And she will smile—O such a happy smile
 As will forever drive away his tears!
 Such smile as shall but grow the sweeter, while
 Eternal happiness eternal years beguile.

XCV.

"High o'er the moonlit mists his fancies ride;
 He deems himself an eagle, though a bat;
 He dives through darkness to the river-side—
 Now flitting to this side, and now to that.
 How large he grows on many a captured gnat!
 And larger still with his imaginings
 Of his alliance with the child of Fate!
 But ah! sad end! a night-hawk clips his wings.
 And into Lethe's stream the worthless carcass flings.

XCVI.

"Into the stream he falls, a mass of lead—
 Nothing ethereal in his being now;
 The sullen waters close above his head,
 And on without another ripple flow!
 They speak to none of buried hopes below;
 What gaudy wings did once above them soar;
 To what supernal heights they thought to go;
 And what a mass of vanity they bore,
 Until an envious owl forbade their flying more.

XCVII.

“And such is Fame! Why should Ambition boast
 The fairest portions of the earth to mar,
 And people with its millions this drear coast,
 Sweeping the globe with pestilence and war?
 Why thus the gates of Tartarus unbar,
 And Cerberus with human victims feed,
 To wear the bloody wreath of Trafalgar,
 Or cull from Blenheim’s holocaust of dead [head?
 The myrtle’s blushing bloom, to grace the conqueror’s

XCVIII.

“Yet such do yonder crowds that trudge along,
 O’er hills and deserts, to the sullen stream;
 Toiling and braving dangers to display
 The monstrous folly of Ambition’s dream.
 Yet still the fools plod on, and happy seem,
 To feed their starving souls on vanity;
 And when they faint beneath the burning beam,
 They shout a frenzied triumph ere they die;
 And living fools catch up and stereotype the lie.”

XCIX.

Scarce had the spirit ceased when Azan’s eyes
 Seemed to grow dim, and, in bewilderment,
 He asked the fiend what was it hid the skies.
 “Alas!” said he, “our holiday is spent;
 We must not tarry now in our descent,
 For lo! the chariot of our awful king
 Proclaims some wonderful or dire event.
 Hence to yon ocean verge, on speedy wing,
 For from the mountain crags his hosts are gathering.”

C.

Headlong they hasted from the rugged hill,
 While thunders echoed o'er the skies afar;
 And dusky shadows seemed the air to fill
 With signs of more than elemental war.
 Chasms opened in the earth and stood ajar,
 While groans replied to thunder's mutterings,
 Which heralded the coming of the ear
 Of Death, that most insatiable of kings,
 To whom the world in vain a votive offering brings.

CL.

Now, from the plain to which the two had fled,
 They turned to look upon the royal train;
 High on the clouds the steeds infernal sped,
 Or leaped from mount to mount in proud disdain,
 Bearing their lordly master o'er the plain.
 They were a monstrous breed; here serpent head
 Was crowned with lion's long and shaggy mane;
 Here next was seen a wingèd quadruped,
 With eagle's talons armed, and eyes of blazing red.

CII.

But these were fair and shapely, when compared
 With those which followed next; and so were they
 Less frightful than the hinder ones, which reared
 Their Gorgon heads for leagues on leagues away,
 And uttered on the gale their hellish neigh.
 So rose their horrid forms afar and nigh
 In an interminably long array;
 So screamed their fiendish voices o'er the sky,
 That Azan crouched upon his knees and prayed to die.

CIII.

Then from the car arose a solemn dirge,
 In which took part each denizen of hell.
 Now far it floated out upon the surge,
 And rose again with each returning swell;
 And now it burst aloud in deafening yell,
 To which came echoes from beneath the ground,
 As if the clods upon the coffin fell
 With sullen, stifled, melancholy sound, [drowned.
 Answered in sobs which were by louder wailings

CIV.

Down through a dreary vale the pageant passed,
 Toward a city filled with travelers
 From Time, who here lay over from the blast
 Until the sea was fit for passengers.
 But in the bay their vessels lay for years,
 Till, rotten, down they sank for evermore;
 And sadly now the hopeless mariners
 Had settled on the inhospitable shore, [o'er.
 Till some returning merchantman should take them

CV.

None ever yet had landed there to stay,
 But counted soon to put again to sea;
 Yet age succeeding age had passed away
 Without affording opportunity.
 Time wore in hopeless watching wearily,
 Till, sad and of their promises ashamed,
 They built their wretched hovels—tried to be
 Contented as they could be with the damned, [named:
 And "Travelers' Rest" their mud-built domiciles they

CVI.

The oldest citizens in council met
 To frame a government; they soon agreed
 To freely welcome all who came, and let
 No nationality, or race, or creed,
 The least objection to a stranger plead.
 None should be banished on account of crime;
 None occupy a space beyond his need;
 Each one determine how to use his time,
 Till chance might furnish them a more congenial clime.

CVII.

But hardly had the council met, when lo!
 A black usurper mounted to the throne,
 And bade the startled legislators go
 Back to their domiciles, and let alone
 The affairs of State, which he would grant to none.
 He would dispose of government at will,
 As he for ages had already done.
 The council sullenly obeyed, and still
 The tyrant reigns alone o'er each sad domicile.

CVIII.

And age on age has brought its immigrants
 From every nation of a teeming sphere,
 Till now the shore is thronged with occupants,
 Who find their numbers larger year by year.
 The twenty thousand generations here
 Still wait the coming of the ship. How long
 They still must wait ere blessèd hope appear!
 Death grows the more tyrannical and strong,
 And wider spreads his realm as larger swells the throng.

CIX.

But now his car is at the audience-hall,
 And all his somber train, with measured tread,
 Move through the silent streets. How sadly all
 The people of this city of the dead
 Look on the solemn pomp! All hope has fled
 Full many a heart—yet on the pageant goes;
 And Azan, by his guardian-spirit led,
 Follows, with heart oppressed, he scarcely knows
 Whither, while thus a fury seems to mock his woes:

“Hail, mortal, whatever thy land!
 Though visions of Eden were thine,
 Though zephyrs have hitherto fanned
 Thy forehead and temples divine,
 Come hither, and sit by the waves as they roll,
 Now sinking abysmal, now reaching the pole,
 And answer in wailings each sorrowful note,
 That breaks o’er the roar of the sea,
 From mariners wrecked, who hopelessly float
 Down on the rough billows to thee.

“Here watch with the dead till the day
 Breaks radiant over the tomb,
 When they shall spread sail and away
 Speed over the sea to their home.
 Not long is the night; some millions of years
 Devoted to exile, to sorrow and tears,
 Will only encourage and strengthen the soul
 That revels in visions of bliss,
 Which brighten as ages eternally roll—
 Why dread a short stay, then, in this?

“I welcome the storm. Though the fire
Is blazing all round as I sing,

When bursts the loud thunder my lyre
More gayly and loudly shall ring;

For the god of the storm cannot hurt me, though far
He sweep o’er the sea in his terrible car.

Then, wild with delight, will I mount on the air,

And with him go thund’ring along,

And ceaselessly, fearlessly, joyfully dare

To answer his thunder with song.

“Let others, who tremble with fear,

Fly swift to unvisited vales;

My home on the billow I rear,

Defying the fiercest of gales.

Then, quitting at pleasure such narrow confine,

The steeds of the tempest I harness as mine,

And count them as willing, and docile, and tame

As ever I wish them to be.

Then welcome, ye tempests and billows of flame!

Sweep on o’er this desolate sea!

“But soon will the tempest be o’er;

Sad silence will follow its reign;

The billows recede from the shore,

And quietly sink in the main.

Then darkness and dullness will triumph, and I,

Alone and unfriended, shall wearily sigh

Till called to my post by the tempest again,

To revel in ruin and woe.

Then bellow, ye waves of the Stygian main!

Sweep on to the ocean below!

“Now gather, ye servants of Death;
 Quit, quit your dark, narrow confine,
 Nor waste in sad wailing your breath,
 Thus shaming your title divine.
 Come, mortal, thou pilgrim from over the sea,
 Attend to the summons, and visit with me
 The court of the monarch who gloomily sits
 Enthroned in the Hall of the Dead,
 And bear to the earth from its numberless sprites
 The story of wonder and dread.”

CX.

Then rose a little cloud of sordid dust
 From every hillock on that beach so vast;
 The ocean also rendered back its trust,
 And millions crowded o'er its boiling waste.
 It seemed that there would never come the last;
 For still they came, and denser grew the cloud,
 Which on the wing of tempest hurried past,
 And into the dark hall began to crowd,
 Which hardly room enough for one in ten allowed.

CXI.

Yet on they pressed, until assembled; all
 Bowed to the haughty monarch, on his throne
 Which rose within the center of the hall,
 And with the beams of light infernal shone.
 Then from the throng arose a hollow moan,
 Which echoed o'er the city loud and long;
 And Azan answered with a stifled groan,
 Which found no echo but the fury's song,
 Still ringing in his ears above the wailing throng.

CXII.

Then rose a specter of unsightly mien,
 And long in contemplation looked around.
 The vast assemblage was no longer seen,
 And silence reigned oppressively profound.
 Each cloud had settled to a little mound,
 Scarce noticeable to a careless eye,
 Yet, trodden on, gave forth a hollow sound,
 That seemed to say to Azan, "Here we lie;
 Tread softly over us, for thou must also die."

CXIII.

The tyrant summoned then the silent host
 To rise, and from the little mounds of dust
 Rose every spirit to his wonted post.
 The first of these in honor and in trust,
 A prince of many names, but known as Lust,
 His bloated image placed before the throne.
 With self-approving dignity he thrust
 His loathsome company on every one,
 And e'en on Death, who thus began, in haughty tone:

CXIV.

"Thou, first to answer to my royal call,
 Whose name is Legion, and whose honors are
 As numerous—one name must serve for all;
 Then I will call thee Lust. Come, thou, prepare
 To tell me of thy service rendered. Where
 Are the rich spoils won by ignoble life?
 Where are the fruits of diligence and care
 In sowing seeds with death and sorrow rife?
 Go, call them from thy halls of lechery and strife."

CXV.

“Most worthy monarch,” then the imp replied,
 “Behold the good which I have turned to ill.
 Here stand the proofs before thee at my side,
 And half this mighty audience-chamber fill.
 How I have sought the pious domicile,
 And talked of heaven and eternity,
 Let these attest, as thousands surely will;
 And none can have assurance to deny
 That none has done a work so damnable as I.

CXVI.

“Pure love is banished from the human breast,
 And chastity lives only as the dead—
 A saintly nothing in a land of rest,
 To which a beggared race of crones has fled.
 Rapine and Rage rave riotous and red
 With blood of innocents; Crime stalks at noon,
 Shameless and fearless, to the wanton’s bed;
 And beasts stand wonder-stricken, that so soon
 Their guiltless blood must flow for crimes which man
 has done.

CXVII.

“Thrones, palaces, and kingdoms I have won;
 Earth’s proudest princes worship at my shrine;
 And Beauty lays its richest gifts upon
 The altars consecrate to lust and wine.
 Youth, hopeful youth, of countenance divine,
 Besotted, see, with wan and burning cheek,
 Belie his Maker’s blessing and design;
 While furies on his guilty conscience wreak
 Dire vengeance that extorts full many a hopeless shriek.

CXVIII.

"Here premature old age, on weary feet,
 Totters to thy embrace, and groans and dies;
 Here parents wrap their babe in burial-sheet,
 Which envious Heaven to their prayers denies;
 Here ghastly Want, with haggard visage, tries
 To welcome thee, sweet harbinger of rest;
 And here dark Melancholy sits and sighs,
 Debating sadly whether it were best
 To wait thy summons or to leap into thy breast.

CXIX.

"Ten thousand vices, and for every vice
 Ten thousand slaves, attest my services,
 Until the blooming bowers of paradise
 Not half so many leaves and flowers possess.
 On, on to thee, with eager haste they press,
 To fill the far-extended bounds of hell
 With their prolific brood of wretchedness.
 Look o'er this vast array, O Death, and tell
 If I, thy servant, have not done my duty well."

CXX.

Then answered Death: "How short must glory last,
 E'en to a servant who has been most true!
 But these will hardly serve to break my fast;
 And from them must I turn to fast anew?
 Are these the mightiest deeds that thou canst do
 To keep thy honored post of trust with me?
 This scanty tithe of being? Go, pursue
 Some shorter path across the sullen sea,
 By which to bring the ruined sons of Deity.

CXXI.

“For couldst thou call from this unsounded deep
 The countless generations buried there;
 Couldst thou through heaven’s ethereal regions sweep,
 And gather all the hosts of its pure air;
 Couldst thou send blight and wailing everywhere,
 Till all earth’s fields and islands evergreen
 Grew pestilential with thy breath; though there
 The flowers grew tainted, and the sons of men
 Made earth a place more foul than hell has ever been—

CXXII.

“What were it all to me, thou bloated beast,
 Who eatest up the flesh, and dost but throw
 The wasted skeleton to me, to feast
 Upon—a dog of thine, so mean and low
 That I must eat thy crumbs, or starving go!
 Give! give! a universal holocaust,
 To gorge me with the last expiring woe
 Of all creation! Less than this, the most
 But whets my appetite. Lo, I am but a ghost!

CXXIII.

“Ambition! Come, thou art a courtier here;
 Come, tell me what is by thy service brought.
 Thou dost in armor bright and wreaths appear;
 Is this to shield thee, and that other sought
 Through vanity? Thou tremblest, dost thou not,
 To look upon me? Lo, this shaft of mine—
 The strongest that hell’s forge has ever wrought—
 Can cleave that Liliputian mail of thine,
 And thee and all thy trophies to the dust consign.”

CXXIV.

"And art thou ignorant," Ambition said,
 "Of all my mighty deeds, despotic Death?
 Go ask yon spectral armies of the dead
 Who sent them hither. Yes, I wear a wreath,
 In winning which I dared thee to thy teeth;
 And having won, I wear. No boasting vain
 Has ever once been uttered by my breath.
 To truckle to the proudest I disdain,
 And here hurl back defiance to thy teeth again."

CXXV.

At this the monarch smiled a ghastly smile,
 And, in cajoling accents, thus replied:
 "Hold, noble spirit! but reflect awhile
 How honors scatter in a storm of pride.
 Pause now, and all resentment lay aside,
 And say not what thou wilt, but what thou hast
 Accomplished. Mark, thy worth is not denied;
 But show thy trophies of achievements past,
 And let all know the worth of them, from first to last."

CXXVI.

Pleased at this speech, Ambition took his crown
 Of flowers from his brow, and, bending low
 Beside the monarch's throne, he laid it down;
 Then next his armor proffered to bestow.
 He then proceeded pompously to show
 What meant the various marks and scars it bore;
 These served to let a race of dastards know
 The matchless prowess of the man that wore, [more.
 And those were made by fools who ne'er should battle

CXXVII.

“And, lo!” said he, “where I have been and hurled
 Princes and palaces together down,
 And wrought the ruin of a peaceful world,
 To build a temple or confirm a crown.
 Are nations haughty or luxurious grown?
 I give them up to war, rapine, and sack:
 The people’s household gods are overthrown;
 Their pillaged homes and temples, charred and black,
 Are guide-posts to Disease and Famine on my track.

CXXVIII.

“My trophies thou wouldst see? Lo, yonder lie
 Ten thousand putrifying carcasses!
 Breathe their sweet odor, reeking to the sky,
 And feel the gnawings of thy hunger less!
 Go to that mother, in her deep distress,
 And mark her tears, as I have often done;
 Go heal her broken heart, her wrongs redress,
 By telling of the valor of that son
 Whose face divine she never more shall look upon.

CXXIX.

“Ask yonder wretch, whom unrelenting Fate
 Has dragged from wealth to utter penury,
 Why now he wanders homeless, desolate,
 Begging his bread of earth’s cold charity.
 Ask of that broken-hearted maid if he
 She loved returned, but, base, betrayed her trust.
 Her sobs will answer, ‘No,’ most bitterly;
 He fell a victim to Ambition’s lust,
 And in a nameless grave he molds back to dust.

CXXX.

"Ask of the sorrowing father, whom rude Time
 Has left but hoary locks, and furrowed cheek,
 And tottering step, and withered hopes, behind
 Aspiring manhood's miserable wreck;
 And if he heave a sigh, and fail to speak,
 Ask of that pale-faced widow why that child
 Ne'er looks for father now; and she will break
 Her silence with the voice of wailing wild—
 The wail of heart once happy in a land that smiled.

CXXXI.

"The ruthless steel my right hand steeps in blood,
 The left the fagot brandishes on high;
 With one I pour on earth a crimson flood,
 And with the other light the midnight sky
 With horrid conflagration. Hark! a cry
 Rises amid yon ruins, as they fall;
 It is a hopeless people there that die
 To leave a niche within some temple's wall
 For such as Alexander, Cesar, Hannibal.

CXXXII.

"The blooming earth becomes a wilderness
 Where'er I tread. Behold yon distant skies,
 Where Lucifer, disdaining to be less,
 Dared e'en against Omnipotence to rise!
 There first confusion in the symphonies
 Of seraph-harps I made, and angels fell;
 Down came the host, and, passing paradise,
 Dragged man along, with all his seed, to swell
 The mighty avalanche, upon its way to hell.

CXXXIII.

"Mercy weeps sadly o'er her daughter, Peace,
 Who, murdered by my hand, before her lies;
 Love the last rite performs at her decease,
 Then lifts the dewy curtains of her eyes
 Cerulean, drops a tear, and heavenward flies,
 To join her sisters in that region where
 No bitter enmities, nor tears, nor sighs,
 Nor blasted hopes, nor comfortless despair,
 Waits on a wretched race whose heritage is care."

CXXXIV.

He ceased and proudly waved his hand, and War
 Called up his millions in a serried host;
 And Famine led a train extending far
 O'er many a weary league of that drear coast;
 Murder came up; and then the pallid ghost
 Of Pestilence breathed foulest odors o'er -
 The moving multitude. "These I can boast
 As mine, O Death! If thou demandest more,
 My honors and my sword I here to thee restore."

CXXXV.

"Are these enough?" said Death, on looking round;
 "Away, ye braggarts, with your worthless train!"
 His voice was answered by the rumbling sound
 Of hell beneath. And Azan looked again,
 But only saw the far-extended plain
 Dotted with little mounds; the gloomy sea
 Was chanting all alone its sad refrain;
 Death sat upon his throne, and sullenly
 Gnashed his huge teeth and died, a gaunt nonentity.

CXXXVI.

Vanished! a vision full of strangest whims!
 Magnificently terrible! Yet all
 Upon the tablet of the memory dims,
 And leaves us musing in the vacant hall.
 Come, let us mount his throne, and mock his call;
 For there was melody e'en in the groans;
 There was a line of beauty where the pall
 Most darkly folded o'er the putrid bones;
 And what a matchless grandeur in those empty thrones!

CXXXVII.

Yes, there is beauty in the face of Death
 We never saw in Life; the glassy eye,
 The long, dark, lifeless lashes underneath,
 Has a neglected air of majesty
 The world would never own. Who can defy
 The gaze that meets him then? Come to the grave,
 Where all the rich, great, noble, lovely, lie
 Rotting—the haughty monarch by his slave—
 And feel a pleasure which ye nowhere else can have.

CXXXVIII.

Here the great lamps of earth go out; for who
 E'er trod its halls in light? That mighty cheat
 Called human justice it doth all undo,
 And leave the spoiled the wronged belied and beat
 E'en with the gold-bought judge an equal seat.
 Memories are sacred in the human mind;
 But in the grave the memory of the great
 Has nothing but one feature left behind [kind.
 To show who blessed or cursed, who fed or robbed, man-

CXXXIX.

Come, ye disconsolate, who weep the lost;
 Here shall ye find the dear ones gone before.
 Come, ye unhappy ones, in friendship crossed;
 Here shall false friends cross and deceive no more.
 Come, child of penury, outcast and poor;
 Rich as earth's richest art thou here to be.
 Come, lovelorn maid, I know thy grief is sore;
 But here the broken heart is healed, and he [thee.
 Who laughed at thy fond faith shall laugh no more at

CXL.

Here let us rest; 'tis time the book to close,
 And take a little recreation here.
 When we get over there, God only knows
 How much we'll lose by wishing to be there.
 Now, Muse, at present with thy song forbear;
 Unstring the lyre; for we have had enough
 To more than satisfy our friends, I fear;
 For some have yawned, I see, or taken snuff,
 Which rather indicates that it is sorry stuff.

CXLI.

But thanks, kind readers. Go, now; sleep away
 The drowsy sense increased by stupid tale.
 Sleep soundly, and should I some future day
 Recall the Muse, to meet her do not fail.
 Perhaps our hero will have broken jail
 In the next canto. Therefore, do not slight
 The whole of it because a part is stale;
 But let the future bring the facts to light, [night!
 And thank your lucky stars so much is done. Good-

CANTO FOURTH.

I.

THERE grows upon the shore of Time a tree
One at the root, but soon in two doth part;
The older branch all gnarled and wrenched we see,
Scathed by the thunder god's far-flying dart,
While a huge ghost is gnawing at its heart.
Within are cavities o'erlaid with mold,
Where swarms of vermin creep, from which we start
Disgusted back, and shudder to be told
That we consorted with this brood in days of old.

II.

And yet we linger round it, loth to leave
Aught that associates its history
With self; we sedulously weave
Chaplets of withered flowers, and carefully
Deposit them within the cavity,
Unmindful that we only make a nest
In which another brood will shortly be
Deposited, and with their filthy forms infest
New scars the ghost is making in the monarch's breast.

III.

The younger branch seems blossoming for aye,
Its fruits inviting us to feed thereon;
It bears no mark of tempest or decay,
But waves in beauty 'neath a cloudless sun.
Clear, healthful waters in its shadows run,
And there we long to drink. Alas! the mind
Grows sick, and faints just as the goal is won,
Since from the pleasing dream it wakes to find
This branch is but the shade of that we left behind.

IV.

O Memory! why repeat thy pilgrimage
 Back to the charnel-houses of the past?
 O Hope! why in a bootless chase engage,
 Since thou must perish in despair at last?
 O longing soul! why wilt thou wasteful cast
 Thy seeds upon a desert or the wave,
 Where what springs up an evil wind will blast,
 Or, should it reach maturity, must have
 A gloomy harvest-home in silence and the grave?

V.

And of the Now—that narrow space between
 The trunks: here consciousness awhile may stop,
 Forgetful of the branches growing green
 Beneath the genial influence of Hope;
 As well as of the others, as they drop
 Poor Memory's withered leaves and faulty fruit;
 Gathering without a care the scanty crop,
 To hide away beneath the hollow root,
 And when it is devoured to perish as the brute.

VI.

Thus, 'twixt the three—the Present, Future, Past—
 Man lives and dies, not knowing whether he
 Belongs to either singly, or is placed
 A partnership apprentice under three.
 Large claims are registered by Memory,
 Which Hope buys up with promises to pay;
 The third is ever shouting, angrily,
 "Up! drive your idle company away!
 He loses every thing who will not save to-day!"

VII.

Azan had hesitated till the pall
 Of Death had settled round. The atmosphere
 Was stifling. From the gloomy audience-hall
 He rambled till he found this tree, all bare,
 Which seemed a frightful shadow in the air;
 No leaves or fruit it at this season bore,
 But, like a phantom guide-post standing there,
 It pointed to bewildered souls the shore
 On which so many had been lodged to leave no more.

VIII.

And here he took his seat beside the sea,
 Near where had lately stood Death's council-hall,
 And gazed upon the old and rotten tree,
 Striving in vain his vision to recall.
 There rolled the dismal sea, but that was all;
 The city and its denizens were gone;
 The winds were chanting dirges funeral
 In the dead tree, and with a hollow moan [down.
 The rotting branches swayed, broke off, and tumbled

IX.

At last this tree decayed was vanished quite
 To naught but little hillocks underneath;
 And through the dim and phosphorescent light
 He read the sad inscription, "Land of Death."
 He hardly dared to look or draw his breath,
 Feeling how horrible it was to be
 (Where nothing could be found to cheer his faith)
 Deserted like the old enchanted tree,
 Here mold'ring over him beside the dismal sea.

X.

And now he sadly turned around, and gazed
 Where now the other of the branches grew;
 And truly was he by the sight amazed
 Which, as by magic, rose before his view.
 There stood the younger branch; a tempest blew
 Among its boughs; and, falling constantly,
 The leaves afforded fuel to renew
 Innumerable little fires, which he
 Saw glowing on the ground, beneath the phantom tree.

XI.

There was a specter always climbing up
 The trunk, but never coming to a limb;
 Another giant specter, at the top,
 Was bending in derision over him.
 In vain the first besought; the other grim
 Repeated his entreaties mockingly,
 And tossed him back; proceeding then to trim
 Away the lower branches of the tree,
 And toss them out of sight into the dismal sea.

XII.

But still the tree grew on; and still the fires
 Burned dimly on; and still the phantom strove
 To climb the tree; and still his vain desires
 Were baffled by the spectral fiend above.
 The little curls of smoke arose, and wove
 A wreath of dingy clouds about the tree;
 And though the tempest blew, it did not move,
 Except to glimmer all more luridly,
 And spread its reddish light o'er all the dismal sea.

XIII.

And higher yet the phantom tree was climbed;
And higher were its lower branches trimmed;
More plaintively the climber's pleadings chimed;
More faintly was the mocking specter limned
Upon the cloud, now by the distance dimmed;
And wider yet became the dismal sea,
Till, only by the range of vision rimmed,
It seemed, as well as that enchanted tree,
The emblem of the never-ending yet to be.

XIV.

And blindness fell on Azan's eyes; no more
Could he the vision follow; all he knew
Was that he sat upon a lonely shore
Where once a tree with two great branches grew.
Now he was puzzled what to think or do;
He had no fellow-traveler to suggest,
For he had lost his guide among the crew
That Death had into his assembly pressed;
And they were gone, but where no witness could attest.

XV.

And what if never more the phantom tree
Might he discover? What if still it grew?
Its branches might extend across the sea;
And, climbing it, he might again renew
His hopes in time. But if his fears were true,
That it had vanished from his sight for aye,
No greater harm could certain knowledge do
Than fear that it was gone. Perhaps delay
Had robbed him of his only chance to get away.

XVI.

Then, groping cautiously along, he came
 At last to something—what, he could not tell;
 'T was not a tree—at least, 't was not the same
 That he had seen and noted down so well.
 But he began to climb, and down he fell
 Again. An avalanche of dust and mold
 Descended with him, and a sudden swell
 Of that infernal ocean o'er him rolled,
 And higher piled the heap of dust and rubbish old.

XVII.

And there he lay, beside the dismal sea,
 Beneath the rubbish of departed years,
 In vain desiring to ascend the tree,
 Whose spectral branches, like remembrancers
 Of vanished pleasure, shone awhile through tears,
 Then passed from sight forever. There he lay,
 The last of all those hopeless travelers,
 Who, having landed on this cheerless bay,
 Had watched and waited for their time to get away.

XVIII.

And they were gone! and he was left to keep
 Sentry alone! How long was it to be?
 Beside the margin of this dismal deep,
 Beneath the shadow of this phantom tree,
 What hope for him, when now he could not see!
 And ships might come, and sail away again,
 But they would never notice him; and he
 Must watch, and wait, and wish, and weep, in vain—
 The solitary tenant of this cheerless plain.

XIX.

Could Memory but remount the leafless past,
 Blind though she were, along the branches bare,
 She might regain the fields of Time, at last,
 And freely breathe again an atmosphere
 Where Hope could live and healthful aspect wear.
 There, too, again the influence of light
 Might to his eyes restore at least a share
 Of that divinest of his senses, sight,
 Now all so useless to him in this land of night.

XX.

There thought would reproduce the springs that gush
 In the fair land of childhood—all the vales
 Where elfins sported in the evening's hush,
 And woodland ringing with the owlet's wails.
 There he would listen to the nursery tales;
 And many a merry laugh of childish glee
 Would echo in those shady mountain dales,
 Till joy would teach him to forget that he
 E'er sat beneath the shadow of the phantom tree.

XXI.

'T was thus, alone beside the sea, his mind
 A varied retrospective vision wrought
 Of all his pleasures to the past confined,
 And all the sorrows he had hither brought.
 How rose associations long forgot,
 Awhile to glimmer, and then fade to naught,
 Then come in transient vividness again!
 Then, slowly fading from his sight, the train,
 In plaintive voices, sang this melancholy strain:

"O where are the moments of innocence fled—
 The mother who bore me, the mother who fed,
 The mother who watched, and so gently caressed,
 And gave me her blessing—the first and the best?
 O where are the moments of innocent joy
 That gladdened the heart of the confident boy?
 The beautiful flowerets that bloomed by the stream,
 Where Hope first delighted with many a dream,
 And painted in fancy a happier clime,
 Unknowing of sorrow, defiant of Time,
 Who crushes the delicate blossoms that spring
 To hallow with fragrance the seraphim's wing,
 Descending to comfort the sorrowing heart.
 Sore smitten below by Grief's poisonous dart?
 O blissful it is e'en in fancy to be
 A sunny-faced urchin, transported with glee!
 Felicity nearest to heaven above,
 To bask in the sunshine of motherly love!

"Or could I but ask for youth's generous zeal,
 And there by Love's shrine again hopefully kneel,
 And worship Perfection's bright image below,
 What visions of heaven would smile on my woe!
 But sad recollections reëcho, 'Decayed
 Are youth's golden castles; its hopes are betrayed;
 The altar of Beauty is covered with dust,
 Its votaries gone to the altars of Lust;
 And, hoary and hopeless, old age has assumed
 The place on the cheek where youth radiant bloomed.'
 O Manhood! thy muscles and courage no more
 Laugh hardship to scorn. Thy triumph is o'er;
 Too soon was the shouting of victory heard.
 The enemy rallied, and, catching the word,

Turned day-star of conquest to night of defeat,
 And groans of Hope, dying, announce thy retreat.
 O Manhood! no more on thy strength I rely—
 The strongest and bravest grow feeble and die.

“O Age! so decrepit, so often deplored;
 With mind all decayed, where rich memories stored,
 Like wheat from a garner, now rotten and old,
 Have sifted and wasted in measure untold;
 Proud castle in ruins, where darkly the wings
 Of night-hawk sweep o’er and the whippoorwill sings
 A wail from Death’s mansions, so cheerlessly clear,
 The thoughtless grow pensive and hush when they hear!
 Deserted, unvisited, comfortless Age!
 What sibylline oracles still on the page,
 All blotted and blurred, are there yet to be read
 By Memory, rescued awhile from the dead!
 Bequeath them to me; lo, the vermin infest
 The granary old—they are eating the rest!
 And soon the last gleaner the place will desert,
 And leave the old ruin to vermin and dirt.
 Fling, fling them, hoar niggard, O fling them to me,
 Companionless waif by this desolate sea!”

XXII.

Then Azan threw the dust and mold aside,
 And moved from his position cautiously,
 Directed by the splashing of the tide
 That still came rushing from the dismal sea.
 He thought he heard it in the cavity
 Of the decaying tree. Its melancholy moan
 Suggested many a mournful melody
 That he had whistled in the days ago,
 To quiet conscience o’er the mischief he had done.

XXIII.

And now the broken chain re-wove its links,
 And stretching out across the dismal seas,
 From seemingly inextricable kinks,
 It woke the sweetest of all harmonies.
 And he was playing on the magic keys
 That Orpheus found upon this gloomy vale.
 What if the touch should bring Eurydice's
 Sweet face, all smiling, though so wan and pale?
 But ah! the enchanting song sank to a piteous wail.

XXIV.

Nor could he now decide from what arose
 The song he seemed to hear. It might but be
 The echo of his gloomy thoughts, or those
 Deep, melancholy murmurs of the sea.
 "O for companions!" sadly muttered he,
 When now the echoes all had died away;
 "Companionship for joy or misery,
 I care not which they bring to me, so they
 With me in this abode will be content to stay."

XXV.

And now he groped about upon the beach,
 In vain endeavoring to find the tree.
 Sometimes he thought he heard the branches screech
 And crack, and, splashing, fall into the sea;
 But farther every crash appeared to be—
 Fainter and fainter each succeeding roar—
 Until the echoes died away, and he,
 To stupid resignation giving o'er,
 Lay down and fell asleep, hoping to wake no more.

XXVI.

How long he slept—a moment, or an age—
 He had no means of knowing. Possibly
 The fact that nothing could his mind engage
 Made it a doubtful question whether he
 Had slept at all. However that may be,
 He thought that he had been asleep awhile;
 But waking up again beside the sea,
 He found himself upon a tangled pile
 Of dirt and rubbish, most abominably vile.

XXVII.

There were some branches of the phantom tree—
 Some broken spars, some weather-beaten shreds
 Of sails—along with rushes from the sea;
 Sea-monsters' skeletons, and bones and heads
 Of reptiles, birds, and men, and quadrupeds,
 Combustibles, and things that would not burn;
 Whatever gathers in the filthy beds
 Of city sewers, mixed with reeds and fern, [learn.
 And books which, when a boy, his teachers made him

XXVIII.

Upon this pile of rubbish near him lay
 A most enormous giant, stark and dead,
 Of whose identity he could not say,
 Because the monster was without a head;
 His feet were also gone, while, o'er him spread,
 A sable mantle every trace concealed,
 Except his huge proportions, panoplied
 In old and rusty armor. There his shield
 Had fallen from his arm, now powerless to wield.

XXIX.

His crookèd scythe, like saber's blunted edge,
 Was pressed on Azan's neck; and to and fro
 Two fiends were pulling it—a privilege,
 By what authority he did not know,
 They took and used to his discomfort. So
 That he repented ever having said
 That he was lonely in the land of woe;
 And there that giant corpse, without a head,
 Did nothing to enhance the comfort of his bed.

XXX.

Ten thousand imps below were busily
 Engaged in firing up the funeral-pyre;
 The fiends kept sawing at his neck, and he
 Could hear the crackling of the kindling fire.
 No breathing-spell was given to inquire
 What meant this arrant piece of deviltry;
 But quick repenting of his rash desire,
 He now resolved to quit his company,
 And, springing to his feet, leaped out into the sea.

XXXI.

Then louder yelled the furies, when they saw
 Their victim wildly making out from shore;
 And Azan thought he heard a loud "Ha! ha!"
 In front of him, and, turning back once more,
 He climbed upon the bank amid the roar
 Of crackling flames, and yelling fiends, and sea.
 Then came a ruder chorus than before,
 And danced around him, as with fiendish glee
 They pelted him with fire and sang this melody:

"Lovest thou the land of spirits,
 Or the one which man inherits?
 What is either, if it cling
 Not to other? What is matter?
 Flesh and flower, land and water—
 Vain, unprofitable things—
 Empty thrones, to whose dominion
 Nothing comes in shape of kings,
 Till the spirit spreads its pinion
 O'er the empty palace-door.
 Matter smiles where spirit hovers,
 Like two fond, capricious lovers;
 Both sit moping by the shore,
 Where the Acheronian billows
 Sigh amid the weeping willows,
 Their lost Eden bending o'er.
 Or along the ocean straying,
 Half sincere, and half bewraying,
 Each the other quits, before
 It will heed the timely warning
 Of a dark, deceitful moor;
 Each, the other's counsel scorning,
 Goes till there is no returning,
 And they part for evermore!

"Nevermore! Can fadeless brightness,
 Or ethereal form and lightness,
 Condescend to flesh and blood?
 No; the flesh its mate encumbers,
 When it faints, or halts, or slumbers.
 Never can the senses rude
 Own that music never ceasing,
 Though at first surpassing good,
 May not be at last unpleasing,
 Or less pleasing than before.

Grieve we, then, if we be parted?
 Let the flesh grow broken-hearted,
 We to other scenes can soar.
 Spirits which by nature languish
 More from want of change than anguish,
 Why should ye to rest give o'er?
 What though called the unforgiven?
 Let us learn from sons of heaven,
 Who, on that celestial shore,
 Cease at times their seraph-singing,
 And, on earthward mission winging,
 Seek the hovel of the poor,
 Weeping, groaning child of sorrow,
 Whom they teach their songs, and borrow
 Sighs, that now delight them more.

“If, then, on this selfish mission
 Angels quit the fields Elysian—
 If the lack of change can cloy
 Those the worlds of light possessing,
 Cursed with overflowing blessing,
 Damned to everlasting joy—
 May not we some change discover,
 That may sense of woe destroy?
 May not icy deserts meet us,
 And with howling tempests greet us?
 There, where glaciers crown the shore,
 We may hold our nightly orgies
 By the icy ocean's surges;
 Where the storm-fiend's garnered store,
 Sleet and snow, in ceaseless showers,
 Through the long and cheerless hours,
 On the desert region pour;

There the sea shall catch the dirges,
To repeat them where it verges

On the happy climes of yore;
There on life's expanding portals—
Fair, short paradise of mortals—

Let it break with hollow roar,
Causing each poor wretch to shiver
On the brink of Death's cold river,
Ere he sinks for evermore.

“Haste we, then, infernal spirits!
Hail, whoe'er that land inherits—
Harpy, ghoul, or goblin dire!
To thy desolate dominion
We are come on lightning pinion,
Soiled with slime and scorched with fire.
Hail, outcast of hope and heaven,
Kinsmen by a common sire!
To thy dreary caverns driven,
We are come, the unforgiven.
Down we sink, where none before
Ever sounded misery's soundings,
Ever reached its boundless boundings,
And to us the tidings bore,
Where no thing of good created
Lives upon the desolated,
Uninhabitable shore.
O we languish, languish, languish!
Bring thy keenest forms of anguish;
All thy vials on us pour!
Only let them not be single;
Only with the tempest mingle
Darkness worse than Egypt wore—
Outer, heaven-accursèd darkness
Of the spirit, evermore!”

XXXII.

Starting as one awakened from a dream
 Before the faculties resume their sway,
 He seemed to see unnumbered furies skim
 Along the surf, for leagues on leagues away.
 Those nearest to him often seemed to say,
 "Come with us, and our land of wonders see."
 He felt an inclination to obey,
 Half hoping he again would find the tree, [be.
 Which somewhere still, he thought, might by this ocean

XXXIII.

Yet, mute and undecided, there he stood,
 Feeling within vague terror born of doubt,
 What all those incantations might forebode.
 What if he joined the wild and rabble rout?
 More difficulties would be brought about,
 Until the web of intricacies, fast
 Entangling him, would never let him out.
 Perhaps this point in his adventures past
 Would cage him hopelessly, and that would be his last.

XXXIV.

Then came the devils back, and in his ear
 They hissed, till furies seemed to fill his brain.
 It was impossible for him to hear
 Aught with distinctness, yet he strove in vain
 To keep from hearing any thing again;
 Till soon his heart, his blood, his members all,
 Refused their proper office to retain—
 One railing at the other, and its call
 Returned in jeers, acknowledging the devil's thrall.

XXXV.

Possessed of devils! Now no more his own;
Perception separated from the mind—
A twin identity! Yet naught alone
Was either, were the other left behind.
Free to remain—since matter cannot bind
The soul—reason might be; yet who will say,
Since soul and body are so closely joined,
That one, a cold abstraction, still will stay
When its associate is rudely torn away?

XXXVI.

No! Yearns the mother o'er a straying child,
Wringing her hands, and sobbing piteously,
Praying, in accents passionately wild,
That child's return? As doth the Deity
Call to the sinner, "Turn; why wilt thou die?"
So must the soul pursue her mortal mate,
Whether in death or raving lunacy,
And through all grades of woe, or forms, or state,
Track its vicissitudes, and share its final fate.

XXXVII.

Mourner! that angel carved upon the stone
Is not a stranger to the clay beneath;
'Tis not a spirit from a world unknown,
Whose duty is to guard the camp of Death;
It feeds upon the self-same air we breathe,
And watches dust for which it feels a care
As strong, as high, as holy, as that faith
That tells us we shall live again, and wear
A blest embodiment, in climes forever fair.

XXXVIII.

Blest occupation of the waiting soul!
 To hover o'er the grave grown green with years!
 Faithful while superadded ages roll,
 And gone are all the mourners and their tears!
 Calm and unmoved alike by doubts and fears,
 Awaiting patiently the hour to come [pears!
 When Gabriel's trump shall sound—till Christ ap-
 Then, first to greet the body from the tomb,
 The soul shall claim and bear her mate in triumph home!

XXXIX.

Reason, surprised and driven from her throne,
 From a safe distance, on the maniac gazed;
 For all that realm which she had called her own
 Was torn away from her by spirits crazed.
 The massive citadel of knowledge blazed
 With all the archives of the memory,
 And tottering fell, to its foundation razed.
 Wild Ruin reigned o'er all, and Reason's eye
 In vain essayed to find one spot to which to fly.

XL.

There all that faithful troop of servants lay—
 The hands, feet, eyes, and members all—in chains,
 Wearing in wild excess their strength away,
 Receiving, as their wages, only pains.
 And Azan raved, and marked himself with stains;
 Like him who dwelt among the tombs of old,
 He rolled and bruised himself, until his veins
 Were swollen, and his features plainly told
 How ruinous the sway that fiends o'er mortals hold.

XLI.

And oft, in saddest mood, his tears would flow
 As freely as the rain on April morn;
 And grievous sobs, with deep, convulsive throe,
 Bewailed his lot that ever he was born.
 Then he would start with wild, defiant scorn,
 Daring Omnipotence to do his worst;
 Then, like a love-sick maid, of all forlorn,
 Into delirious ravings he would burst,
 Wishing himself and every thing he loved accurst.

XLII.

Thus, as the engineer the test applies
 In every way to engine ne'er before
 Required its giant strength to exercise,
 Ere he upon a voyage quits the shore,
 So these infernal spirits tried their power
 O'er every member of their new-made slave.
 Then, after having tried them o'er and o'er,
 And found them full of strength enough to brave
 The surf, they plunged him in, thus chanting to the
 wave:

“Hiss, O hiss! ye seething waves—
 Robbers of unnumbered graves,
 Glutted thieves of cheated heaven,
 Home of all the unforgiven!
 Hiss and yawn to drink us in,
 Like your serpent-keeper, sin!
 Swallow, and disgorge again
 Woe that thou canst not contain;

Toss, yet hold thy victim still;
 Torture, but forbear to kill;
 Burn, but let him not consume;
 Closely chain, but give him room—
 Room to wander where he will—
 But the wretched pris'ner still!

“Lodge him on some polar shore,
 Where the ice-crags evermore
 Shall impale; yet bear him on
 Frozen to a torrid zone!
 In some glacier deep imbed
 On some plain, unvisited
 Save by wild Auroral light,
 Dancing o'er a world of night!
 To the dragon's dungeon lead;
 Let him there, among the dead,
 Where the caverns ever ring
 With infernal reveling,
 Wander darkling, and behold
 Wonders hitherto untold!”

XLIII.

As moves the ship by power not its own,
 Though seemingly a part of it, so now
 Did the demoniac move with many a groan,
 And muscles quivering with the keenest throe,
 Amid the seething waves that rolled below;
 And as he shrieked the fiend-suggested song,
 There rose in that surrounding world of woe,
 On every side, a wildly shrieking throng
 That swelled the inharmonious chorus loud and long.

XLIV.

Yet fiercely on among the monsters grim—

Torn by their fangs, beset by horrid hags—
With straining sinews he was forced to swim.

Now he was rudely tossed against the crags,
Or caught in treacherous nets of tangled flags
Of some infernal fen, where through the slime

The serpent Sin her hateful figure drags,
Leaving her spawn of misery and crime
To hatch in hell, and crawl upon the shores of Time.

XLV.

Yet o'er him hovering, like an angel kind

Watching the prodigal in Folly's ways,
Came sadly on the monarch of the mind,
The shadow of the queen of other days.

She did not fail her feeble voice to raise
To call the wanderer back; yet all was vain.

A moment would the maniac stop and gaze;
But seeing nothing, with a cry of pain
And mingled fear, he madly struggled on again.

XLVI.

On, ever on, with strength incredible,

Through countless perils, spread on every side,
O'er every intervening obstacle,

The demon-actuated Azan plied

His limbs, of their accustomed rest denied.

At last he climbed upon an icy steep,

Where storms and billows with each other vied
The most intolerable roar to keep;

And mid this strife of winds and waves he fell asleep.

XLVII.

There, like Prometheus, who, throughout the day,
 Fed an insatiate vulture at his core,
 But gathered strength at night, so Azan lay,
 Fettered in sleep, upon that icy shore.
 The demons that had tortured him gave o'er
 Their sport awhile, and, mounting on the storm,
 Mingled their voices with its dismal roar;
 And Reason sadly hovered o'er the form,
 Watching, though powerless to shelter it from harm.

XLVIII.

And there he lay for ages in the ice
 (Time here is counted not by days or years,
 Since hell has never known a sun to rise
 Or set in its dominions; groans, and tears,
 And changes, show how wearily Time wears);
 But Reason hovered o'er him faithfully,
 While frosty arches rose on massive piers,
 And spanned the channels, where the noisy sea
 Broke through its manacles, unconquerably free.

XLIX.

And chainless as the wave, though not so wild,
 Sat Reason, as the arches spanned around;
 And, as the gorgeous palace rose, she smiled
 To see herself again a monarch crowned.
 'T was now an icy diadem that bound
 Her temples; and the spacious palace-hall
 Gleamed with a set magnificent beyond
 The proudest that have graced this earthly ball,
 From Shinar's tower to Thebes's hundred-gated wall.

L.

And now the fiends had sought the icy fields,
 Away beyond the reach of Reason's eye,
 When Azan's body to its owner yields,
 And joyful starts to find her hovering nigh;
 But vanished was the palace. Mountains high
 Loomed in the distance on returning sight;
 Plains bleak and desolate, eternally
 Oppressed by tempests, snows, and leaden night,
 Were all that he beheld his footsteps to invite.

LI.

No sun arose o'er Orient waves, to set
 Behind the golden curtains of the West;
 No stars shone there; no moon, the eye to greet;
 But comets, in their wildest fashion dressed,
 Close on this grim sphere in their orbit pressed;
 Their lurid trains were horrid to behold,
 And while they seemed this region to invest
 With waves of light—white, purple, green, and gold—
 All things around were still unutterably cold.

LII.

Whatever way the eager vision strained,
 It only saw the glaciers far extend
 O'er dreary solitudes, where winter reigned:
 There jutted cliffs, which nothing could ascend,
 Frowning above the floods between them penned;
 While, in the distance, turrets old and riven
 A more forbidding aspect seemed to lend
 To the whole scene than e'en the blight of heaven—
 Dark testimonials of sins yet unforgiven.

LIII.

Bones, whitened in the snows of ages, lay
 In horrible confusion strewed around—
 A ghastly answer, Yes! to all who say
 That any battle-field is holy ground.
 Classic, those crumbling ruins? and that mound,
 Where man, to sate a mad ambition, poured
 Hearts' blood to the infernal gods, and drowned
 The widow's wails, who hopelessly deplored
 The fate which tore away, but never more restored?

LIV.

Away the Heaven-insulting lie! The field
 Where fierce contending armies meet, and sink
 To rise no more—of such the deed is sealed—
 Writ more indelibly than if with ink,
 Or graven on the stone—to fiends who drink
 Their victims' blood, and prompt their slaves to rear
 Some monument, at which they fondly think,
 Because baptized with many an orphan's tear,
 Posterity should bow, foul Murder to revere.

LV.

Behold one picture in this endless waste
 Of ruins! Pallid horror marks his brow;
 And hands, in which a scepter once was placed,
 Hang trembling in immortal terror now.
 A jeweled crown, half buried in the snow,
 Neglected lies. The golden bowl has poured
 Its last libation to the gods below,
 And those who gathered round the festal board
 Have fled in wild dismay, or perished with their lord.

LVI.

Confronting the pale specter stands a wall
 Long left to slow decay; yet still it wears
 The dismal aspect of a dining-hall
 For graveless *manes* of departed years.
 Magnificent in its decay, it rears
 Its massive pile in this inclement zone,
 Whose skies forever drop their frozen tears;
 That rattle cheerlessly upon the stone
 Where sits the crownless monarch of the ages gone.

LVII.

And Memory backward flies; and Fancy rears
 Babel's aspiring pile to heaven again.
 There, by Euphrates' banks, again appears
 A mighty city, where the busy train
 Toil in their lot of poverty and pain,
 To sate the lust of kings; there mitred priest
 Fawns on the rich, and turns in proud disdain
 From the poor slave, as if he were a beast
 Assigned to thankless toil, while haughty tyrants feast.

LVIII.

And we behold again the hosts which God
 Uses to turn the wrath of man to praise;
 We read in every animated clod
 The ministry of vengeance, that delays
 To check the vauntings of a puny race
 Until the measure fills. Then comes the call,
 And armies gather. From his holy place
 The Eternal hurls his thunders, and the pall
 Of desolation settles o'er the proudest hall.

LIX.

We look upon the plains of Babylon,
 As day's descending orb reluctant sets;
 The bloody combats of the day are done,
 And every champion to his tent retreats,
 To spread his spoils or grieve o'er his defeats.
 The dead, with solemn pomp, across the plain
 Are carried to their graves. The bard repeats
 The many achievements of the valiant slain,
 And they are laid away, and ne'er will war again.

LX.

And now the twilight trembles on the spires,
 Gilding the last time those resplendent domes,
 Destined to-night to feed the greedy fires—
 Ah yes! th' insatiable avenger comes!
 Luxurious stalls! where pampered hecatombs
 Have long been waiting for their time to die!
 See! o'er the northern sky the signal looms!
 God waves his lightning-torches in the sky,
 And bellowing thunders peal Jehovah's battle-cry!

LXI.

Day sinks to darkness, and ten thousand hearts
 Dream only of the dance and plighted bowl;
 No thought of their approaching doom imparts
 A shade of sorrow to th' expectant soul.
 To-night, beneath the sensual control
 Of wine and lust, they shall forget the fight,
 The harp replace the trumpet, and the roll
 Of drum be drowned in boisterous delight—
 None dare be sorrowful—Belshazzar feasts to-night.

LXII.

Then of the Persian camp we take a view;
 There all is bustle, all expectancy.
 There is a dark and bloody work to do,
 And moments lengthen into ages. Die
 Some must to-night; some brightly-beaming eye
 Must glaze forever. Fate alone can tell [by!"
 Who are the doomed. Youths send their loves "Good-
 Old soldiers, too, inspect their armor well,
 And whet the sword, which soon the lists of death must
 swell.

LXIII.

And lo! Euphrates' waters turn aside
 And flood the plain below; and where his course
 Was wont in stately majesty to glide,
 Now rush preeipitate the Medish horse
 And Persian chariots, emulous to force
 A passage first, and sheathe their shining blades
 In palpitating hearts, nor feel remorse
 In plucking bacchants' garlands from their heads,
 And sending shrieking maids dishonored to the shades.

LXIV.

The watchman's warning to the court is passed,
 But only jests are sent him in reply,
 Until along the palace-wall is traced
 A line which meets the haughty tyrant's eye.
 Now fly, ye revelers! in terror fly!
 Destruction presses on your flying heels!
 Heed not a courtesan's despairing cry;
 Stay not to see how proud Belshazzar reels,
 As Hebrew Daniel God's impending wrath reveals.

LXV.

Now back, ye terror-stricken lords! These halls,
 Your place of banquet, must become your tomb.
 Hark! heard ye not the sentry's frightened calls,
 "To arms! to arms! the Medes and Persians come!"
 Too late, alas! it is the day of doom;
 Yet show your valor, since ye can but die!
 Be worthy of the smiles of those to whom
 Ye boasted of your deeds of chivalry!
 Be not as pale as they who on your arms rely!

LXVI.

Where is the wine that set your cheeks aglow?
 Affrighted deer! why look so wildly round?
 Ye who to battle could so proudly go,
 Why grow so feeble at the distant sound
 Of hosts whose tread advancing shakes the ground?
 Hark! nearer still it comes! Its echoes ring
 Within the outer court. The victims crowned
 Await the sacrifice; the trembling king
 Forgets his royalty—a vain and worthless thing.

LXVII.

Now, Belus, greet thy uninvited guest!
 Prepare for him a higher seat than thine!
 He comes to drink, at proud Belshazzar's feast,
 Libations of hearts' blood, as thou of wine.
 Lamps he shall kindle, which will far outshine
 Thy feeble show of splendor. See! they rise
 Above the temples of the gods, and twine
 A fiery chaplet round their heads. The skies
 Grow bright with flames—and Babylon in ruins lies!

LXVIII.

Weep, Babylonia, weep! Humanity

Her strong appeals has made to thee in vain;
But now has vengeance overtaken thee—

Thy daughters ravished, and thy heroes slain;
Thy desecrated fanes and smoking plain
Mock thy lone orphanage, and bid thee weep.

Put on thy weeds of mourning, ne'er again
To leer upon thy paramours; they sleep
No more to wake, thy harlot company to keep.

LXIX.

Thy last bright festival is o'er; the grave
Is gorged with streams of thy best blood. Alas!
Thy fairest maiden and thy meanest slave
Lie, side by side, unburied; o'er them pass
The iron-footed steed, until a mass
Of scorched and mangled blood and flesh they lie.

Great God! thy arm at length its vengeance has;
Thy hand has written for the passer-by
An epitaph for man, and for eternity!

LXX.

There stands it—"Mene!"—on the ruined wall;
O that we might these words as truly read,
For hearts that beat with pride before they fall,
As he—this horrid specter of the dead!
Yet will not living generations heed.

How eloquent are these dismantled walls!

How reverently should a mortal tread,
In contemplation, through deserted halls [crawls!
O'er whose vain founder's bones the slimy reptile.

LXXI.

And the proud conquerors—Assyrian, Mede,
 And Persian—all have had their day, and gone,
 Leaving the conquered homes untenanted
 To thee, who now, like Niobe, alone
 Dost weep until transformed to rigid stone;
 And tears, shed in thy widowhood, congeal,
 Which from thy sleepless eyelids trickling down,
 Invoking pity of the gods. Vain, vain appeal!
 For gods, like men, do seldom for the helpless feel.

LXXII.

But on, impatient spirits! Why delay
 Mid ancient desolations, or bemoan
 The fate to which these empires passed away?
 Thebes, Memphis, Nineveh, No, Babylon,
 Palmyra, Salem, Troy—and they are gone!
 Who reads their epitaph, and sees a ray
 Of light around the mass of dirt and stone,
 To point him, o'er Life's dark, uncertain way,
 To Hope's bright resting-place in everlasting day?

LXXIII.

In vain for this amid the ruins sits
 Sad Contemplation's melancholy shade.
 The owl, responsive to her sighing, flits
 And hoots within some dismal colonnade.
 Such is the part the mighty past has played
 In the poor farce of vain humanity.
 The owl his observations, too, has made,
 And gravely to our musings makes reply,
 Hooting the song of life and splendor's memory.

LXXIV.

And now, Adieu! if parting words befit
 Immortal desolations. Babylon,
 Thy foul abominations let me quit
 With but this sad reflection of my own:
 Some one may look on me when I am gone,
 And, sickened, turn to find the living, who,
 Though mortal, tread upon the sculptured stone
 That hides immortal nothingness from view;
 Then, Babylon the Great, to thee a last adieu!

LXXV.

Now, over everlasting snows, away
 We speed with Azan's goblin company,
 Till far behind, seen through the doubtful ray,
 The Tower of Babel lifts its spire on high,
 As doth the shivered oak beseechingly
 Stretch out its lightning-blasted arms in vain;
 And then it fades from sight, as on we fly
 Across the dreary, ice-enveloped plain,
 Where Silence, Death, and Night uninterrupted reign.

LXXVI.

The winds sweep o'er these trackless solitudes,
 But shriek not by us in their onward flight;
 For Silence, like a guardian spirit, broods
 O'er the chill paradise of Death and Night.
 Here we are greeted by the flickering light
 Of pale Aurora, tripping o'er the waste,
 Who comes observant of the festal rite,
 And through the driving hail and snow makes haste
 To light their nuptial hall by solitude embraced.

LXXVII.

The envious wind in maddest fury blows,
 And she protects her lighted lamp in vain;
 Oft comes a sudden gust, and out it goes,
 And over all the darkness spreads again.
 Fair brides-maid of black Night, the snow and rain
 Delight to mar thy only festal hour!
 Long jilted by the king of day, thy train
 Went off to wait on Night, who, old and sour,
 Puts out thy wedding-torch before her chamber-door.

LXXVIII.

Now marshaled see, along the trembling sky,
 Uncounted hosts of flaming warriors!
 No clashing of their fiery panoply
 Along the firmament terrific roars;
 No loud and braggart Boanerges pours
 His stores of thunder forth on pigmy men,
 To fright, and maim, and slaughter them by scores,
 And awe them into meek submission, when
 A devastated world may never hope again.

LXXIX.

They mount and brandish arms; then, silently,
 Back to the shades withdraw with noiseless flight;
 And, ere the spectral image on the eye
 Is fixed, the host is swallowed up in night.
 In vain we long to fix the eager sight;
 For darkness intervenes. We fain would rest
 In blest relief of darkness; but the light
 Bursts forth again, in wilder figures drest,
 The weary eye to taunt, the inquiring mind to jest.

LXXX.

Who that has wandered in the starless night,
 Facing the chilling blast and blinding sleet,
 Has never felt a thrill of wild delight,
 A lantern gleaming through the storm to greet?
 He that has not has never felt how sweet
 The joy on first beholding these displays;
 He that has never cursed the vapory cheat
 Knows nothing of the bitterness that preys
 On hearts that hailed at first the vain, delusive ways.

LXXXI.

Yet thus it is: when hope dilates the breast,
 Despair succeeds, within the heart to dwell;
 Just when fond man is hoping to be blest,
 The monster comes, and makes the heart a hell.
 The bright and beautiful may please too well,
 Awakening aspirations doomed to die;
 Just as the fish, lured by the vernal swell
 Of some small rivulet, ascends too high,
 Where soon the summer sun drinks all the channel dry.

LXXXII.

Thus Azan sank at last in hopelessness
 Among those bleak, interminable snows;
 For ages he had been companionless
 In solitude, or haunted by his foes;
 For ages he had taken his repose
 Upon the icy cliffs o'erlooking hell,
 Or waked to witness the expiring throes
 Of spirit-empires, as they reeled and fell, [knell.
 And storm and earthquake rang aloud their funeral-

LXXXIII.

And he had talked with spirits of the past
 ' Until the apparitions faded all,
 And shrieked their parting curses on the blast,
 In mockery to his despairing call;
 And he had seen—but Night her sable pall
 Had spread o'er all his visions. Weary quite
 Of calling back from dull Oblivion's thrall
 His disappointments, he would now invite
 Forgetfulness and Death to put them all to right.

LXXXIV.

Thus utterly uncaring, down he lay,
 Not even willing what he willed to do;
 But half accepting, throwing half away,
 The fiat of the Fates, he hardly knew
 If will dictated, or if will withdrew
 Its right the servile members to direct.
 Thus down upon the frozen plain he threw
 Himself, without a covering to protect,
 With not a wish to breathe, or care to disaffect.

LXXXV.

Careless of Fate, when Fate has done its worst,
 Man recks not when, nor where, nor how, he dies.
 What matters it, though the wild thunder burst?
 Its sudden peals now fail to wake surprise.
 What matters it, if all unseen he lies
 Dying by inches? or if in the sea,
 Where, as he sinks, his comrades' drowning cries
 Ring in his ear, loudly, despairingly?
 'T is all the same to him; he can no more than die.

LXXXVI.

But Desperation does not make the bed
 On which man meditates to breathe his last.
 'Tis not upon a wild, untenanted,
 Ice-manae'd dominion, where the blast
 O'er the cold form, from which the soul has passed,
 Heaps for a winding-sheet the driven snow;
 'Tis not upon the ocean's watery waste,
 Nor desert-sands, nor marshes dark and low;
 Nor yet upon the rack, in ecstasies of woe.

LXXXVII.

There is, beyond the busy hum of life,
 A quiet cottage which the fancy rears,
 Whither, withdrawing from successful strife,
 The hero is to spend declining years—
 A stranger to his early toils and fears;
 There well-weighed bales of hoary folly buy,
 To barter for a few unmeaning tears,
 To melt the clods that over him shall lie,
 And then draw up his feet, and bless the world, and die!

LXXXVIII.

Thus toil thy life away, and from thy breast
 Pluck every warm emotion, to behold
 Thyself a naked stork in downy nest,
 And petulantly railing at the cold,
 Which pinches all thy members bare and old!
 Go on, brave youth, and execute thy plan,
 And die, a toothless ape in halls of gold!
 Die, Care's hod-bearer, cosmopolitan,
 Contemptible, misguided, miserable man!

LXXXIX.

"Thus to the stars!" some child of Folly wrote,
 And, vanity-inflated, rose on air,
 Like a frail bubble, or a tiny mote,
 Seen only when the sun was shining fair.
 The sun went down, and still the mote was there,
 But shone no more—its borrowed light was gone;
 But silly fools, still eager gazing where
 It last was seen, beheld beyond the moon
 A little star, and said it was the man that shone.

XC.

Some talk of springs in deserts; verdant trees
 Waving their welcome to the traveler;
 Birds warbling in the boughs; the cooling breeze
 Wafting sweet odors on celestial air;
 A sun descending gloriously fair;
 Skies spreading out a canopy of blue;
 And stars, the eyes of angels, twinkling there,
 Whose wings to sunset give their golden hue;
 Hands beckoning him to bid the weary world adieu.

XCI.

O were it thus when mortals come to die!
 Would kindred spirits hover o'er me there,
 Though there were none of earth around to sigh,
 Or kiss my cheek, or whisper in my ear
 A last adieu, or shed a parting tear?
 Could Faith at all times see the islet green,
 Though in the distance many a weary year,
 How short an interval would lie between
 My nights of doubt and woe and that last hour serene!

XCII.

Then would I to my humble cot, and sleep,
 Nor burn the midnight taper longer, when
 None wake save those who only wake to weep,
 Or plot injustice to their fellow-men.
 I would not bid the poor, unconscious pen
 Relieve my groaning spirit of its woes,
 But, careless whether I should wake again,
 Breathe light as evening winds that shut the rose,
 Leave all to night and God, and peacefully repose.

XCIII.

But O how horrible it is to feel
 That these may be but fancies of the brain!
 That, after all, the life-blood may congeal
 In us away up on some desert-plain!
 That, after all, perhaps, the boiling main,
 Where none but storm-fiends shriek amid the gales,
 May welcome us to halls which man in vain
 Has sought to plunder of their wealth, and rails
 At the white rolling surf that drowns his pirate wails.

XCIV.

But rather sink in ocean's rocky bed,
 And feed its finny denizens, or lie
 In some pearl-girdled grotto, where the dread
 Sea-monarch holds his royal majesty
 (Well earned as that which men to men apply),
 Or contemplates his watery domain—
 Methinks it were some pleasure thus to die;
 But ah! how sad upon an icy plain,
 Alone, unseen, to yield the dust to dust again!

XCv.

To wrap in spotless winding-sheets of snow,
 And close the eye on all one loves forever;
 To let the disembodied spirit go
 A howling goblin o'er the Stygian river;
 The most endearing of all ties to sever,
 With the black, scowling Atropos alone,
 Who clips the thread, howe'er the wretch may shiver
 And cling to life, until the parting groan
 Bears off the soul, and leaves the body cold as stone!

XCvI.

But Azan—was he dying? was his last
 So near at hand? His eye was growing dull;
 To all appearance he was sinking fast—
 Each breath was followed by a perfect lull.
 He reached his hands out, and began to pull
 The snow around him, murmuring, "I am cold!"
 Then he would talk of wild and wonderful
 Dominions, which he never should behold; [told.
 And then he gasped again—life's tale would soon be

XCvII.

Just then Aurora gleamed along the sky,
 Tremblingly treading o'er the black abyss,
 And threw her fitful luster on his eye,
 As if a snow-flake from the lid to kiss,
 Or melt it there, a gem of Pity's bliss.
 Again she vanished in the leaden cloud—
 Gone like man's praise or friendly promises,
 Or woman's wails, intolerably loud, [ing crowd.
 Which, while they mourn the dead, would win the liv-

XCVIII.

But Azan caught the beam of light that fell
 Upon his eye; it touched the proper string,
 And roused him from the dull, lethargic spell
 So fast his senses all enveloping.
 He looked, and saw as by enchantment spring
 Wild, jagged peaks of everlasting snow
 Above the plain, and round him form a ring,
 Which frowned so gloomily on him below
 That in his heart he felt Fear's more than mortal throe.

XCIX.

There was a cave high up the mountain side,
 And through its rocky arches dropped below
 The tears of spirits who had sought to hide
 In this dark cave from their excessive woe.
 These trickled through the underlying snow,
 Till, gathering into fountains, forth they burst,
 Welling like geysers with perpetual flow;
 Hissing on icy banks, where spirits curst [thirst.
 Knelt down and drank in vain to quench their raging

C.

Down, gurgling through the hollow hills, they came,
 Until they issued in the boiling fount,
 Which, though in heathen tale denied a name,
 Feeds four dark streams, described in their account—
 Oblivion, rolling darkly by the mount
 Of human knowledge; Cocytus, the blind;
 Styx, madly roaring, as our hate is wont
 To break beyond the bounds to it assigned; [hind.
 And Phlegethon, which burns what Styx has left be-

CI.

Thus as in Eden, gently winding, flowed
 Four streams that watered its perennial flowers,
 Where, morn and eve, the happy Adam bowed
 And blessed the God of piety's calm hours,
 Who reared his altar first amid the bowers—
 So now there are four streams where he, unblest,
 Wanders a hopeless vagabond, and cowers
 In fear amid their brakes, or, sorely prest
 By thirst and faintness, seeks satiety and rest.

CII.

Then issued from this cave a monster dire,
 And spread his wings as if for lofty flight;
 His nostrils spouting forth a stream of fire
 Long as a comet's tail, whose baleful light
 Scares half the stars from the array of night.
 With head erected o'er the boiling flood,
 He glared with fiery eyes, of which the sight
 Alone might serve to chill the bravest blood;
 And from his horrid head ten horns defiant stood.

CIII.

Upon his body was a coat of mail,
 Impenetrable save to lightning shaft;
 His feet were armed with talons huge; his tail
 An arrow and a sting had both engrafted;
 His wings were of sufficient size to waft
 Himself, together with whatever prey
 He might have caught by courage or by craft;
 And teeth—a double row—so strong were they,
 The strongest prison-bars were never in his way.

CIV.

Hell shook from center to circumference
At every step he made, and, when he spoke,
The topmost crags of every eminence
Toppled, and from their resting-places broke;
Around him gathered densest clouds of smoke,
In which assembled all the hellish throng
That now again to revelry awoke;
Grown weary, having silent lain so long,
They now discordant sang this misanthropic song:

“Drunkards, debauchees, and traitors;
Bawds, adulterers, and debtors;
Hypocrites and counterfeiterers;
Sabbath-breakers and profane;
Robbers, thieves, and desperadoes—
Welcome to this land of shadows,
Where perpetual tornadoes
Celebrate the Dragon's reign!

“Liars, cheats, and overreachers;
Judges, guardians, and preachers,
Who, from comforters and teachers,
Turned beguilers unto sin;
Proud ones, who oppressed the lowly,
Mocked and spit upon the holy—
Having won your passage duly,
To your waiting seats come in!

“Warriors, in your mantles gory,
Fresh from fields of strife and glory;
Statesmen, ogle-eyed and hoary,
From your diplomatic games;

From your man-disgracing scuffle
 After honor, come and shuffle
 Off your coats of arms and ruffle,
 With your empty-sounding names!

“Come from vice’s marshes muddy;
 Come from fields of battle bloody;
 Come from palace, stole, and study;
 Come, ye countless millions, come!
 Come ye, whether brave or fearing,
 Whether clad in rags, or wearing
 Purple robes and gems unsparing,
 Welcome to the Dragon’s home!”

CV.

There was a momentary pause, and then
 The sound of rushing waters, and the crash
 Of falling rocks, while over all the scene
 Auroral beams of light began to flash;
 Then down in common ruin mountains dash—
 Rocks, snows, and waters, and the Dragon’s train:
 A hollow rumbling, then a sudden splash,
 And now a plunge, and then a cry of pain,
 And then monotonously growled the beast again.

CVI.

Yet on they rushed—poor Azan shut his eyes,
 Next moment thinking to be hid so deep
 Beneath the ruin rushing from the skies
 That it were well enough to be asleep.
 Along it came, adown the frozen steep,
 Till underneath him he the movement felt—
 The avalanche, enlarging in its sweep,
 Now round the mountain stretched its mighty belt,
 While more and more the air of burning sulphur smelt.

CVII.

Then suddenly the rushing ceased, and still
As death itself the mingled masses lay;
And Azan felt a momentary thrill
Of joy at heart. The crash had passed away.
He looked around; the light of dawning day,
Upon a scene unutterably drear,
Its wildest freaks in mockery seemed to play;
And every object, on approaching near,
Would change its form and size, then wholly disappear.

CVIII.

Again he thought he saw the dismal sea,
And, like an old acquaintance, sought its shore;
There stood the shadow of the phantom tree,
As hollow, gnarled, and rotten as before;
There was the giant specter bending o'er
The one that scaled the trunk; and now he ran
To climb up on the branches one time more,
But found himself a disappointed man
Just at the moment when his climbing he began.

CIX.

He seemed to see a river deep and wide,
And on its bosom stately vessels plowed;
But as he hasted to the river-side,
The ships and river vanished into cloud.
Some leagues away he saw a mansion proud,
Its roof illumined by the rising sun;
"No phantom this," he almost said aloud,
As he began in breathless haste to run;
But in a moment more the mansion, too, was gone.

CX.

Thus on he rambled, till at length he found
 Himself beside a lava-covered plain,
 Which seemed to him to have no farther bound;
 For long he walked in search of it in vain.
 The lava seemed its softness to retain,
 Though not, apparently, its former heat.
 Stones, dropping down, would for awhile remain
 The same in shape and substance, all complete,
 But, when observed again, had joined the mass concrete.

CXI.

The cliffs along it slowly melted down,
 And swelled the volume of the dismal deep;
 And every object that it touched upon
 Soon ceased distinct identity to keep.
 He also saw, upon the bordering steep,
 Millions of spirits, climbing on and on;
 But, never getting higher, they would leap,
 With wild dismay and wilder curses, down,
 And disappear at last, as did the falling stone.

CXII.

On Azan wandered, till the twilight sank
 Again to night, when naught the silence broke,
 Save now a spirit leaping from the bank,
 And now the sullen splashing of a rock.
 More strongly still of sulphur smelt the smoke,
 Now nearly suffocating him. He knew
 Not how to guide his steps; and if he took
 But one false step, that lava-ocean, too,
 Would not permit him more his journey to pursue.

CXIII.

Here rest, my Muse, beside this sullen deep,
 Where no kind angel hovers overhead.
 Heaven, and the saints, and holy angels, keep
 Our hero safe! Hast thou a tear to shed?
 O let it flow for Azan, wandering led
 Until the murky shadows gather o'er;
 And he is looking round to find his bed
 Upon this black, inhospitable shore,
 Where once his eyelids closed may never open more.

CXIV.

His form is lost in shadows. From our sight
 Visions and shapes are passing fast away
 To caverns of impenetrable light,
 And Chaos over all resumes his sway.
 Dreams fade away in air, or wildly play
 Fantastic freaks which memory cannot hold;
 Ghosts flock to darkness; apparitions stay
 But for a moment, and the cloud is rolled
 O'er all the scene—dark, solitary, bleak, and cold.

CXV.

And here, O Solitude, thy hermit scowl
 Welcomes the weary from the walks of men,
 To calm the heavings of the troubled soul,
 And bid it love itself and kind again.
 Thou old magician, thou hast fled in vain!
 Man on thy haunts with eager haste has prest,
 And torn the veil from off thine altars, when
 Thou wast not looking for so rude a guest,
 Who told some mournful tale, or made some sad request.

CXVI.

Here may the eye of Melancholy brood
 O'er boundless vistas in a world of dreams,
 Where Fancy peoples the vast solitude
 With spirits flitting in Aurora's beams;
 Here the dark wild with myriad goblins teems;
 Here doth Imagination downward soar
 Mid clouds and smoke, and where the glacier gleams
 Alight and count her dark adventures o'er,
 And when the tale is done depart in search of more.

CXVII.

Through her from thee, O Solitude, have sprung
 Cities and temples of departed days;
 And bards have rambled their old halls among,
 To sing their desolation or their praise;
 And I have caught the melancholy lays
 To chant again, where my own countrymen
 Have shed their blood in the vain hope to raise
 Their bleeding land from smoke and ashes, when
 A ruthless tyrant crushed her to the earth again.

CXVIII.

Here triumphs, festivals, and all the train
 Of human pride, have swept by to the tomb;
 Nations their bloody strifes upon thy plain
 Enacted o'er, then vanished in thy gloom.
 Here has th' unwilling victim met his doom,
 And after him the sacrificing priest
 Pressed closely on to give another room,
 Who, e'er half sated by the bloody feast,
 Has followed in his turn, and perished like the rest.

CXIX.

And thus the world in miniature has passed;
 And I have sighed, O Solitude, and wept
 That thy domain, so infinitely vast,
 No cup Lethean for the sorrowing kept;
 That even here the vengeful Fury crept
 Into some cranny of my Eden fair,
 And planted poison while I fondly slept
 Beneath its bowers, and dreamed that Woe and Care,
 With all their gloomy train, should never enter there.

CXX.

But ah! in spite of all my dreams, the thoughts
 Unbidden come, and haunt my solitude,
 Until my Eden's most secluded spots
 Are swarming with the grim, unwelcome brood.
 Why should they on my privacy intrude,
 And round me shriek in all their frenzy wild?
 They are the children, who their sire pursued,
 Born of some wood-nymph, who, by him beguiled,
 Roves here, and weeps the hour when first on him she
 smiled.

CXXI.

E'en from the womb of the chaotic void
 Phantoms of life around the wanderer spring;
 Man scarcely has a moment's rest enjoyed,
 When he is startled by the Fury's wing,
 Or writhes to feel Remorse's scorpion-sting.
 The wails of sorrow fall upon his ear,
 And music of infernal reveling,
 And cursèd incantations he must hear
 At every turn along its labyrinth frontier.

CXXII.

How far the road may stretch itself, O Muse,
 Before we reach the place where we may tryst
 With nothing but dumb Solitude, and lose
 All words and numbers in a cloud of mist
 Which no poetic mountain ever kissed,
 We may be able by and by to say;
 But here we ramble as our mood may list,
 And sing to hear the echoes die away [they.
 And come again from realms more dreary still than

CXXIII.

And yet, O Solitude, if I have caught
 Sweet inspiration from thee, 't was in vain
 That on a bubble, playing æronaut,
 I tried to navigate thy vast domain;
 For who can reckon disappointment's pain
 In measured words, when from all words the mind
 Essays to leap, and, free from bit or rein,
 To leave its clumsy symbols all behind,
 But, when too late, awakes its sad mistake to find?

CXXIV.

For as to ocean there are bounds assigned,
 Where the firm rock hurls back its surge in spray,
 So, too, a little while, eternal Mind
 Permits the vaunting Reason to display
 Its folly. As He did not drive away
 The tribes from Shinar's plain till Babel rose,
 So, now, He lets us have our time to play
 Our game of building words; and then He shows
 How little is the most that man, the braggart, knows.

CXXV.

Still let me twine about thy royal brow [crowned
 The flowers that spring from thy own soil. Thus
 With nameless wreath, go to thy kingdom now,
 Unfettered in thy speech, in thought unbound;
 And while Eternity shall roll around;
 While systems rush to naught, and new ones rise
 And, glimmering, go away to night profound;
 While angels make or mar a paradise;
 While man essays to scale to heaven, and falls and dies;

CXXVI.

While Good and Evil wage incessant war,
 And Heaven and Hell for many a world contend—
 Thy mighty empire shall not feel the jar
 In which a universe shall find its end.
 When worlds of beauty into chaos blend,
 When Life sits wrapped in weeds of widowhood,
 When all Olympus from their thrones descend,
 As feeble as the feeblest flesh and blood,
 A king thou still shalt be, eternal Solitude!

CXXVII.

Mayhap, when final victory shall crown
 The hosts enlisted in behalf of Good;
 When Evil's empire lays its weapons down,
 And mortals enter into brotherhood
 With gods; when angels sound the interlude
 In the grand drama of Eternity—
 Thou mayst become an actor, Solitude,
 And, throwing off thy veil of mystery,
 Talk face to face with him who longs thy face to see.

CXXVIII.

Then as I stand upon thy borders, where
 The spirit-world but touches thy domain,
 May I, at least, so much thy favor share
 As that I may not fear to come again,
 To follow Azan o'er the lava-plain;
 And if again to earth alive we go,
 We'll pray for thee a long and happy reign—
 A reign which, when the ages hoary grow,
 Shall not have passed its prime, unfearing overthrow.



CANTO FIFTH.

I.

NOW, Muse, once more thy company I crave
Far, far beyond the *Thule* of the mind,
Which feels, when at the portals of the grave,
The real and its creatures lie behind.
Beyond the limits hitherto assigned
The drear dominions of the damned, explore
New continents with me, perchance to find
That, when our weary pinions cease to soar,
Fields unexplored and vast stretch on for evermore.

II.

There let thy heavenly image float along
On pinions such as grace no other being,
Save those who first awoke the natal song
Of earth—when, the omnific fiat freeing
Dull matter from its cage, and darkness fleeing,
The new creation sang its ode to Light.
Then let us, solitary worlds surveying,
Still on to outer darkness bend our flight,
Where Chaos wooed and won his ebon consort, Night.

III.

We stayed awhile our course, oppressed with awe,
In presence of the solitude profound,
And moralized, till we no longer saw
The wandering youth, and not the slightest sound
Disturbed the murky atmosphere around.
Now let us track him from the hall of Death,
Till, in pursuit of him, we pass beyond
The limits where we paused and held our breath
Before the old magician with the nameless wreath.

IV.

Beside the lava-desert Azan strolled
 In pensive silence for awhile, and then
 Paused on the margin of a pool, to hold
 A parley with a horrid denizen,
 Who, fettered there, implored relief in vain.
 Sad pity overcame his heart to see
 So sorrowful a spectacle; but then,
 He thought, perhaps it was no worse to be
 Tied down in hell than ever left to wander free.

V.

"Why publish to a stranger all thy woes?"
 Quoth Azan to the spirit's doleful plaints;
 "On earth the heavy-laden mourner goes
 To priests, to penance, rosaries, and saints,
 And them with all his miseries acquaints."
 "And so did I," replied the wretched sprite;
 "I even told the Virgin all my wants,
 And paid the priest; but all was useless quite.
 O help me from this pit! O for one ray of light!"

VI.

"My help is vain," said Azan, bitterly;
 "I am benighted, and constrained to go
 Gropping my way along beside this sea;
 And where it is to end I do not know.
 Perhaps upon the other margin grow
 Bright harvests of eternal joy—and pray
 Tell me, that am a stranger here below,
 If thou hast never heard some spirit say
 How far it was across to those fair fields of day."

VII.

"Tis not for me to give directions," said
 The fiend, with curses bitter. "Go thy way,
 And grope around these regions of the dead
 Until Eternity is growing gray;
 I will not guide thee, if thou let me stay
 To languish here. Wilt thou assistance lend?
 So many ages here, and not a ray
 Of light upon this darkness to descend!
 Reach out thy hand to me, and let this anguish end!"

VIII.

"If I essayed to help thee," he replied,
 "Thou wouldst but drag me down along with thee;
 And thou art no worse off, of help denied,
 Than if I shared the woe and agony
 Which thou endurest in this lava-sea.
 But what dost thou of outer darkness know?
 I lost the guide who started there with me,
 And if I have to go alone, I'll go,
 If any one the way that leads me there will show."

IX.

To which the fiend, in mockery, replied:
 "Go pray, or ask some friend or priest to pray,
 To send an angel down to be thy guide.
 No doubt but he could help thee on the way
 Far better than a devil; for they say
 A fiend's experience is a perfect cheat,
 And, though he knew, he surely would betray
 Thy confidence, and lead thy wandering feet [treat."
 To tangled labyrinths, whence thou couldst ne'er re-

X.

"Thou wast a mortal once, it then would seem,"
 Said Azan, as the spirit closed his speech.
 "And if I was!" replied a hopeless scream
 That woke ten thousand echoes, with its screech,
 Along the lava-crag above the beach.
 "And if I were," now mockingly it rang,
 "I would not come to hell, and hope to reach
 The truth by having felt its utmost pang;
 For naught but deeper doubt from sorrow ever sprang."

XI.

"Another falsehood, born of guilty woe!"
 Said Azan to himself. "If I were he,
 And had the opportunity, I know
 That I would answer questions civilly."
 Just then there came a murmur from the sea,
 "No! thou wouldst rather in its depth be drowned
 Than tell of hell its sad reality;
 For only God its utter woe can sound."
 Then quiet reigned o'er all the dreary lava-pond.

XII.

"O spirit! whither, whither art thou gone?"
 Called Azan to the fiend; but naught replied,
 Save from beneath the lake a dismal groan,
 Mingling with "Whither thou?" on every side,
 Until in echoes far away it died.
 He heard the beating of his heart within,
 As there he stood alone without a guide,
 Not knowing how his journey to begin
 Toward that land of hell by mortal yet unseen.

XIII.

The only sounds that greeted him were those
 Returning echoes of his hopeless shouts.
Dark, leaden mists o'er all the scene arose,
 Assuming shapes which filled his mind with doubts
 Of his identity and whereabouts.
He saw his image in the clouds above,
 And thought it one of those infernal scouts
That he imagined had been sent to prove
His true intent; so he determined not to move.

XIV.

Now into hamlets, now to mountains wild,
 To plunging cataracts, to foaming seas,
These vapors changed, and long his eyes beguiled;
 Then came a hot and sulphur-laden breeze,
 Which swept the clouds away; then giant trees
He saw, some distance to his right, upon the shore,
 And, rousing quickly from his reveries,
Set out toward the wood, to try once more
What wonders in this world were still for him in store.

XV.

No path was here, and gulches deep and wide
 Sometimes obstructed him for many an hour;
For could he have descended, still the tide
 Of molten lava threatened to devour.
Thus he was forced to make a long detour,
And often was the wood from sight withdrawn,
 Till he to keep his course lost all his power,
And looked to find the trees—but they were gone;
Still, o'er the desert-plain he rambled on and on.

XVI.

His feet were sore; his hands were bruised and torn;
 His tongue was swollen; he was mad with thirst;
 His brain was feverish; his spirit worn,
 Till anguish seemed his very heart to burst.
 Yet on—no rest till he had seen the worst,
 Or passed the bounds of this infernal waste,
 E'en to the very fiends of hell accurst—
 On o'er the weary leagues he trudged, in haste
 To find some sign of life, and of its pleasure taste.

XVII.

For weeks he seemed to travel, though no day
 Or night returning told of flying time;
 A thousand leagues, or more, behind him lay,
 And still no life in this unhappy clime;
 But now the rocks were growing sleek with slime,
 And to them often would he press his tongue,
 Now hanging from his mouth and black with grime;
 Then, with a keener sense of anguish stung,
 Across the dreary desert would he trudge along.

XVIII.

And there was water—God be praised, at last!
 He heard its murmurs underneath his feet;
 The dismal lava-desert now was past,
 And water—running water, water sweet—
 Was rushing near him, soon his eyes to greet!
 O would he never reach the running stream?
 To plunge into its waves were bliss complete.
 Then through the gloom he caught the water's gleam;
 Then in the crystal wave, in joy, he plunged to swim.

XIX.

But what was his astonishment, as he
 Plunged into what he thought a running river,
 To find it not a river, nor a sea,
 But something cold enough to make him shiver!
 The like of what he now beheld had never
 Before been opened to his wondering eyes:
 It seemed a world of jelly in a quiver,
 With jelly clouds, and jelly lands and skies,
 And jelly mountains, crowned with jelly snow and ice.

XX.

There was the noise of rushing waters still,
 Yet not a drop in all this jelly land;
 But he was growing so benumbed and chill
 That he began to think the lava-strand,
 With all its dreary leagues of molten sand,
 Was quite as comfortable world as this.
 No spot he found was firm enough to stand
 Upon; yet o'er him hung a precipice,
 Which seemed about to fall at every step of his.

XXI.

Waist-deep he floundered, trying now to climb
 The threat'ning cliff, but all attempt was vain—
 It fled from him; but if, at any time,
 He turned away, it followed him again;
 And should he then his weary members strain
 To get away from it, a shaking mass
 Would slip and stop before him on the plain,
 And form a mountain which he could not pass,
 Because the side was steep, and smooth as polished glass.

XXII.

And now on every side the way was blocked,
 And he was in the middle of a dell; he
 Observed it growing deeper as he walked.
 Then on another mode of travel fell he,
 By lying down and crawling on his belly;
 And, moving cautiously, at last he found
 Himself upon a moving mass of jelly,
 Which slipped along without the slightest sound,
 Till, to his joy, it struck a piece of solid ground.

XXIII.

Here, after many struggles, on the shore
 He lay and rested, shouting now and then,
 And listening, till the echoes came no more,
 To know if he were heard by beasts or men;
 But not the slightest sound returned again.
 It was another land of voiceless death,
 Which trembled to its very center when
 He moved a limb or drew a heavy breath; [neath.
 And e'en the clouds were strange as was the earth be-

XXIV.

He rose at last, and started on his way;
 The crust of earth, just thick enough to bear
 His weight, would oft his weary feet betray,
 And, breaking through, hold him a pris'ner there;
 But it were vain to murmur or despair,
 For there was none to whom to charge his woes;
 And there was none to hear his piteous prayer;
 And very lifelessness forbade repose;
 And all sensation lost produced the keenest throes.

XXV.

At last he reached a mountain range, and found
A stream of water flowing from the base;
And down he sat beside it on the ground,
Full happy now, in such a lonely place,
To find a spring and wash his sooty face,
And bathe his swollen feet, and close his eyes
In Nature's sweet restorer's mild embrace;
And, being fully rested, to arise
To name this mountain gorge "the Gate of Paradise."

XXVI.

Down through the gorge, along the stream, he took
His journey, after he had roused from sleep—
Now stopping at the mountain crags to look,
Which rose on either side so high and steep
That nothing on their sides a place could keep.
Then onward leisurely again he strolled,
Now gazing where the waters made a leap
Over a ledge of rocks, and, foaming, rolled
Against the o'erhanging cliffs, in many a frothy fold.

XXVII.

But bliss is short; pain, like poor relatives,
Comes, bag and baggage, for a lengthened stay;
And happy man is he who welcome gives
When they arrive and when they go away!
Thus Azan had one short and happy day
In passing through the Gate of Paradise;
But soon he came to plains again, and they
Seemed half submerged; and, breathing many sighs,
He left the gates behind hid in these gloomy skies.

XXVIII.

Then on he trudged, until the mountain piles
 Were lost in night behind th' horizon's verge—
 Oft passing on his journey foggy isles,
 That floated loose upon the sullen surge.
 These soon would sink, and others would emerge,
 Until the rising waters overspread
 The plains on every side; still did he urge
 His onward course, with firm resolve to tread
 The farthest limits of the country of the dead.

XXIX.

Thus over marshy, solitary plains,
 Now climbing mountains, and now wading streams,
 Exploring those untenanted domains,
 And of their occupation forming schemes
 As wild as polar navigators' dreams.
 At last a wall appeared before his eye:
 Huge mountain masses, joined by golden seams,
 Rose up till hidden by the leaden sky,
 And seemed, at last, all farther passage to deny.

XXX.

Each way he looked the solid barrier
 Appeared to rise till lost in fleecy mist.
 He found not e'en a fissure anywhere;
 And he must necessarily desist
 From farther seeking to increase the list
 Of countries in that world of perfect death,
 Where nothing animated did exist,
 And where he started e'en to hear his breath—
 The only proof of life in all this land beneath.

XXXI.

Forever humid from the trickling rain,
 The wall was covered with a coat of slime,
 Which made his most determined efforts vain
 O'er this stupendous barrier to climb;
 He oft attempted it, but, every time,
 He fell completely foiled; then, more and more
 Dejected, he would charge himself with crime
 In seeking worlds untrodden heretofore,
 Beyond the sooty bounds of Pluto's fiery shore.

XXXII.

But why reflect? Did all the gloomy past
 Afford him e'en a temporary rest?
 Was there an hour which he had prayed to last
 Longer than others, in that it was blest?
 Was there a spot in peerless beauty drest,
 Which bade him linger, and his dwelling rear?
 No; as the sunshine fell upon the crest
 Of his projected home, a cloud drew near,
 And Pleasure fled away before Woe's harbinger.

XXXIII.

Then he would not go back; if ended here
 His journey and existence, just as well
 Lie down to rest, without a sigh or tear
 For what he had enjoyed, or what befell
 In or beyond the boundaries of hell—
 Just as the mariner in polar seas,
 Whom everlasting walls of ice compel
 To stop his course, resolves e'en there to freeze,
 Nor sigh for friends or home and all its haunts of ease.

XXXIV.

And thus a Drake, perchance, disdained to look
 Back to his island-home and fond embrace
 Of friends and family, whom he forsook
 The circumpolar passages to trace;
 And, when destruction stared him in the face,
 He reared his tomb in those eternal snows.
 So Azan now resolved to keep his place,
 And, at the point where nothing farther goes,
 Make virtue of necessity, and seek repose.

XXXV.

With face directed to the wall, he sat
 Upon a bank confronting—O how full
 Of bitter thoughts against the tyrant, Fate,
 Who even here claimed undisputed rule!
 He wished for strength Titanic now to pull
 The wall away; but vain to wish, and still
 More vain to murmur, though his heart were full
 Of grievances most just: the fretful will
 Must learn to bear the yoke, be it for good or ill.

XXXVI.

He now relapsed to moody reveries—
 His only refuge in his loneliness—
 And dreamed about the Gate of Paradise
 Which he had found in his extreme distress,
 So opportune, his weary frame to bless.
 Why was it there? and why untenanted?
 Why hid in mountains? He could only guess,
 It might be here the Saviour made his bed
 When he had come to see the regions of the dead.

XXXVII.

While he was thus, in dreamy vagaries,
 Discoursing to himself, he heard a sound,
 At which he started up in great surprise,
 And cast at once a hasty glance around.
 There, to his wonderment and joy, he found
 The truant spirit, which had been his guide,
 Returned at last, to outer darkness bound;
 No word he spoke, and silently they tried
 To pass the wall which had so long his strength defied.

XXXVIII.

No opposition did it now present,
 But parted as the two approached; and through
 This strangely-opened sesame they went,
 And entered on the territory new.
 There, as in wonder Azan paused to view
 The mighty wall which baffled him before,
 Back to their place the mountain masses flew,
 Like the great shutters of a prison-door,
 And he was fastened in, perhaps for evermore.

XXXIX.

But "Onward!" was his watch-word; not behind
 Attraction or discovery; the past
 He had to blank oblivion resigned,
 Nor cared he now how many a dreary waste
 Denied return. Here was a region vast
 Through which he still could prosecute his way,
 And, if it were the worst, it was the last;
 And deeper gloom would change to brightest day,
 If this refused to him a place in which to stay.

XL.

The whole appearance of this world was strange,
 Though not all new: an undulating plain
 Extended far beyond the narrow range
 Of sight, where Night asserted her domain;
 Along each valley wound an inky vein
 Of what seemed water, but no murmurs rose
 As, leaping o'er the rocks, the liquid train
 Of waves and bubbles bounded fast and close
 Along the mossy banks, where fairies might repose.

XLI.

The trees were bare, though not by winter's frost,
 For leaves they never had; unnumbered flowers
 Bloomed in the vales, but, smell and color lost,
 They hung like shadows in the leafless bowers; [ers
 Birds hopped from branch to branch, but all their pow-
 Of song were gone, and all the plumage gay
 Which Nature here upon her minstrels showers
 Was absent from their bodies—there were they,
 But hideous mockeries of all our bright array.

XLII.

Beasts tame and wild were there: the patient ox,
 The fiery steed, the nimble-footed hare,
 The tawny king of beasts, the cunning fox,
 The tiger crouching in his jungle lair,
 The bristly boar, the black and shaggy bear,
 And every other beast of wood and field
 His proper mode of life was following there;
 But not a sound from any one revealed
 What native traits of each within him lay concealed.

XLIII.

Nor were the inky waters destitute
 Of their uncounted denizens: there played
 The timid perch, for which the hungry trout
 Lay hid among the rushes; undismayed
 By thought of danger, there a minnow strayed,
 Dearly to pay for his temerity;
 Here prowled about the slimy eel, and preyed
 On all that chanced within his reach to lie;
 There crawled the turtle out upon a log to dry.

XLIV.

Storks, cranes, and snipes were wading thro' the lakes,
 Mid reeds and water-lilies, quick to see
 Some straggling fish secreted in the brakes,
 Unconscious of a foe's proximity;
 High up upon some lone and naked tree
 The fish-hawk and the moody pelican
 Were perched, and there awaited, anxiously,
 Their time to swoop, and bear aloft again
 The scaly victim struggling to be free in vain.

XLV.

But through the whole the deepest silence reigned—
 No roaring beast, no wildly-screaming bird,
 No groan or cry, as from a creature pained,
 Through all that throng of living things was heard;
 No rustle of the slender rushes, stirred
 By wind, or wave, or beast or bird of prey—
 A pantomimic drama, in a word,
 Which Nature to the darkness seemed to play, [Day.
 Where Death made sport of Life, and Night derided

XLVI.

Naught lacked the mighty pantomimic show
 But man to see, and language to express,
 The thrills of exultation or of woe,
 And what he could not comprehend, to guess;
 But man had never come with love to bless,
 Or curse with hate, this land of Death and Night,
 That from its gloomy regions of duress
 Had never opened to his wondering sight, [blight.
 And mocked earth's fairest scenes with those of foulest

XLVII.

O how had Nature mocked ambitious man
 By barring him possession of this wild!
 Long since he might have carried out a plan
 Of winning it for his impatient child,
 Ambition, whom to please, the more he toiled
 He more and more ungovernable grew,
 Until he turned the world, which lovely smiled,
 To all but this, and then, impatient, drew
 His plan for making hell a royal province, too.

XLVIII.

But when the torch, lit from the altars where
 The fetid fumes of sacrifice arose
 To Murder, Lust, and Mammon, ceased to glare
 Through darkness, other regions to disclose,
 He halted to unbosom all his woes;
 As it is said that Alexander wept
 Because his sword could find no other foes,
 Although the world a thousand nations kept [swept.
 Secure and by the self-styled conqueror's sword un-

XLIX.

So man calls this the darkness increate
 And tenantless, because he is not there;
 He deems himself the only child of Fate
 Worthy the title of a prince to wear,
 And of the universal realm to share.
 If checked in his attempts, he turns around,
 And doth, with solemn impudence, declare
 The *Thule* of creation he has found,
 And God, or any other, never saw beyond.

L.

Azan had found a world in embryo,
 Or rather an abortion from the womb
 Of Nature, who, on first maternal throe,
 Retired to rear it in primeval gloom
 Till it to years of puberty should come;
 But she was prematurely seized with pain,
 And gave the bantling, still-born, to the tomb,
 And, doubtful if she e'er might smile again,
 In hope of offspring, she gave it to Night's domain.

LI.

But soon forgotten were her buried hopes,
 And, tumid with new worlds, she sighed no more;
 Just as the mother piteously drops
 First tears of mourning o'er the child she bore,
 She gave this first abortion's sorrow o'er
 To rear a home for her expected child,
 Which should to her a mother's joy restore.
 It came, and, with its radiant form beguiled,
 She quite forgot the babe born in this dreary wild.

LII.

And He that blessed his second-born—his Seth—
 With light, sensation, language, eye, and soul,
 Breathed not in this imperfect form his breath,
 And, making man, gave up to him the whole,
 To beautify and keep with mild control.
 He bade the darkness seize upon the first,
 And drag it from amid the orbs that roll
 Around his throne; and Night took up and nursed
 The little waif that God had in his anger cursed.

LIII.

As he beheld the strangely silent scene,
 Azan essayed in wonder to exclaim,
 And ask what all this pantomime could mean;
 But not a sound from vocal organs came,
 Nor could his tongue the simplest question frame;
 Then, making signs for what he could not say,
 He found that his attendant had the same
 Spell on his tongue; and thus in silence they
 Across the plains pursued their solitary way.

LIV.

Here, past a tangled hedge of blighted flowers,
 That never came to beauty in their time,
 They rambled on for many weary hours,
 In hope of reaching soon a happier clime;
 But darker grew the way, and sleek with slime,
 Until they reached what seemed to be a flight
 Of water-polished steps. Here cliffs sublime
 Rose arching o'er the way, and rayless Night
 Had found a hiding-place from e'en the fear of Light.

LV.

Here was her bridal-chamber and her bed,
 Where Death, retiring from his council-hall
 In the great city of the damned and dead,
 Like Samson, in her lap asleep would fall;
 Here had she borne to him his children, all
 Of whom, like Saturn, he had eaten up;
 And here she planted nightshade by the wall,
 And mixed at his return the poison-cup,
 And bade him of her rich and loving potions sup.

LVI.

Then while he slept she from his stomach tore
 The children of her womb; she roamed away,
 And left them scattered all these regions o'er,
 As beasts, or birds, or trees, or fish; and they
 With voiceless greed upon each other prey.
 Then back she steals, ere Death awakes, and lies
 In his embrace, as Lot's two daughters lay
 With him, till he, unwitting, opes his eyes,
 And, hungry, hurries forth to seek another prize.

LVII.

The two along this hall pursued their way,
 In silent trepidation, on and on—
 Azan attempting oft a word to say,
 Forgetting that the power of speech was gone—
 Oft straying in the darkness all alone,
 And fearful lest his only guide had fled.
 He gathered in his hands a weighty stone,
 And raised and dropped it from above his head,
 But not an echo rose—no sound at all, though dead.

LVIII.

The hall was growing narrower; the stair
 Was growing sleeker with its slime and mud;
 More stupefying was the murky air,
 And horror was congealing fast his blood.
 Now at the bottom of the stair he stood,
 And, reaching out against the slimy wall,
 He made his way along as best he could,
 In momentary dread that he would fall
 Where none was near to help, or know his fate at all.

LIX.

Now round his legs the noisome reptiles twined;
 He felt their cold embraces round his breast;
 About his temples they began to wind,
 Till every hair appeared of life possest,
 And wriggled like young serpents in their nest.
 At last he found that he could walk no more—
 He was himself a serpent, like the rest—
 And, falling to the ground, he hissed as o'er
 The dark and slimy path his hydra-head he bore.

LX.

Now through the dark and narrow crevices,
 To which the hall had dwindled, on he went—
 The passage gradually growing less,
 And seemingly in all directions bent;
 He knew not whether it was straight descent,
 Or upward, or to right or left; his guide,
 In this emergency, no comfort lent;
 And of his senses all but touch denied
 Their office as his difficulties multiplied.

LXI.

Then touch appeared to be of little use;
 For everywhere he now began to feel
 That particles of matter, which were loose,
 By gathering thick upon him, soon would steal
 The touch, to which he made his last appeal.
 The fact that he was anywhere was quite
 Absorbed in that which made him sensible
 That he was now admitted to the right
 Of being everywhere, and everywhere was light.

LXII.

For now, at last, his spirit seemed diffused
 Throughout the general mass, and he was all:
 His sense, emotions, faculties, were loosed
 From objectivity's restrictive thrall.
 What matter now to him if Night her pall
 Spread o'er her sleeping children, where they lay,
 Regardless of the dark and slimy hall?
 To him a brighter than the light of day [away.
 Had dawned and chased the terrors and the ghosts

LXIII.

His spirit now assumed the place of God,
 And through all things he saw with faultless eye;
 Now, at a glance, he clearly understood
 How every thing is fully known on high,
 Though veiled in night's profoundest secrecy.
 Here crime again its perpetrator met,
 And grew incorporate, till by and by
 The actor and the deed, united, set
 The stamp of memory there, which neither could forget.

LXIV.

Ideal beings, which had hitherto
 No home or parent, save the heart or brain,
 Now on the head or heart a Gorgon grew,
 A part thereof forever to remain;
 Man here was not of Satan's gloomy train,
 But he was very Devil, heart and head;
 In him originated every pain
 That hell inflicted on awakened dread;
 In him the quenchless flame and deathless furies bred.

LXV.

Th' eternal principles of good and ill
 Seemed here to meet upon a neutral line,
 And, from this center radiating, fill
 The boundless universe with light divine,
 Or spread the baneful germs of base design;
 Here man, the heir of both, arriving, took
 His place beside the good, a star to shine,
 Or, with the ill, his ebon trident shook
 Darkness and woe throughout creation's farthest nook.

LXVI.

Here, for one moment, as the ages run,
 Each soul in all the universe must sway
 Th' omnific scepter from Jehovah's throne;
 Then lay it down, and go his chosen way,
 His own imperial fiat to obey.
 Once to man's will God says a loud Amen—
 Loud as the thunder of the judgment-day;
 And man, a partner of the angels, then,
 Or fiends, goes on without a chance of change again.

LXVII.

How awful must it be to rule when He
 Who made the worlds doth abdicate his throne,
 And leaves the dread responsibility
 Of weal or woe to human will alone!
 "Choose ye for life or death!" and it is done.
 Man, with a breath, lights up Eternity,
 Or blows out, hopelessly, the glowing sun
 That shone upon his being's path, and he
 Henceforth must blame himself that he no more can see.

LXVIII.

Here Azan trembling stood; the vacant throne
 Was waiting for him now to take his seat;
 Upon each side an awful spirit shone,
 And laid the robes of office at his feet.
 He dared not look at either; for to meet
 Their gaze direct was more than he could bear.
 He thought of many maxims men repeat;
 But O how silly did he think them there,
 When all Eternity was hanging by a hair!

LXIX.

At last, with trembling, he the scepter took,
 While death-like silence reigned around; he then
 One moment dared toward the past to look,
 And then into the future, if his ken
 Could bring its secrets to his sight again.
 What then he saw is not for man to know;
 But o'er the silence rolled a loud "Amen!"
 As Azan said, with reverent voice and low,
 "God is the Judge of all, and be it ever so!"

LXX.

Then Azan fell upon his face, and wept
 Such tears as never yet had filled his eyes;
 They dropped as dews which angels might have kept
 Since man's bright Sabbath morn in paradise.
 And then a voice beside him bade him rise;
 He looked, and saw again his spirit guide.
 The throne was gone, and all the dismal skies
 Were back again; while standing at his side,
 Thus to the silent shades the spirit imperious cried:

LXXI.

"Tenants of these infernal realms, arise!
 Immortal spirits, will ye cleave to dust?
 Awake, ye children of those golden skies,
 Whence into outer darkness ye were thrust
 By vengeful Power that calls the sentence just!
 Ye never felt the clogs that fetter slaves,
 Who on the mercy of their master trust.
 Let matter be the sport of winds and waves,
 But ye can ne'er remain imprisoned in your graves.

LXXII.

"Shades of a universe forever past!
 Arise, and reassert the spirit's right—
 The reclamation of this dreary waste,
 Which long has labored under woe and blight,
 And wished and waited for the dawn of light.
 That light will come alone when spirits free
 Refuse to slumber in eternal night.
 God has ascended to his throne, and we
 The sovereigns of ourselves henceforth must ever be.

LXXIII.

“Arise, ye children of Futurity!

Wait not the tardy feet of laggard Time;
Spring from his bosom ere the truant be

Debarred an entrance to your spirit-clime.

Spring from the womb of Night, ye brood of slime,
Ere imbecility shall overcome

The dotard Death, who, greedy, spent his prime
In eating up the children of the womb
Of her that nursed him first, and gave his age a home.”

LXXIV.

He ceased, and wild commotion shook the spheres;

Terrific lightnings flashed from pole to pole;

And misty shadows of unnumbered years

Before the wondering eyes began to roll:

The parts of what just now had seemed a whole,
Inseparable, lost cohesive power;

And swarming millions, breaking its control,
Tumultuous rose upon the air, and bore
Away the mass that seemed all lifeless just before.

LXXV.

Then all around in solid ranks they formed,

The Past and Future mustering vast arrays;

The first behind in somber colors swarmed,

While those before beholder's eyes would daze.

They shone like suns in full meridian blaze,
And scorched awhile with their excessive heat;

But soon their brightness vanished in the haze,
Until at last a smoky winding-sheet
Brought on their last eclipse, eternal and complete.

LXXVI.

Thus did the brightest shadows, one by one,
 Desert the hosts arrayed before the eye;
 Like flying meteors, they soon were gone,
 And Azan nothing farther could descry
 But that upon the utmost boundary
 Of that strange world he stood and looked in vain.
 At last he turned, and asked the reason why
 He had beheld this vast but empty train;
 And thus the spirit broke the silence once again:

LXXVII.

“’Tis not for thee to ask the question why
 Are all these wonders granted thee to see;
 Thou must await the truth to verify,
 When Time is blended with Eternity.
 Not till the books are open, not till we
 Read from their pages, not until the mind
 Knows no distinction ’twixt the yet-to-be
 And that for countless ages left behind,
 Can we unfold the secrets in this vale confined.

LXXVIII.

“But turn we hence; there is a mountain height
 Upon this dismal region’s boundary,
 From which I often look upon a sight
 Far more engaging to the weary eye.
 There stand three sisters ’neath a cloudless sky,
 Whose forms I, Moses-like, can but behold,
 And from the lovely prospect turn and die.
 Sad spirit’s pilgrimage, whose land of gold
 Must fade again in night, in canker, rust, and mold!

LXXX.

"Alas! no to the mountain: but no more
 Beyond that hour may I a flight essay.
 There will I bid thee hasten to that shore
 Lit by the splendours of eternal day
 Arise, and spread thy wings, and soar away—
 No longer linger, lest the spell may bind
 And doomed forever be to me and to my
 Those songs like me awake too late to find [bind.]
 How sweet those blessings are which we have left be-

LXXXI.

Thus spoke the spirit, and away they flew
 O'er dreary plains of desolation all
 They stood again to gaze their last adieu
 On the bare summit of a lofty hill
 It were enough the haunted soul to thrill
 To stand upon the boundary of hell
 And look betwixt upon a sight so chill
 The heaviest load, where terrors rose and fell
 And every echo rung some deathless spirit's knell.

LXXXII.

But in the distance rose a lonely land
 Where sunlight loved to linger, through the hedges
 Of winter sometimes rested there. How grand
 Appeared the arches of Aurora's light,
 Just rising now upon the base of Night
 And now the spirit cried in agony
 "O lonely land, of which I were the light
 Look! for the dark abyss I were in thee
 My sorrowful adieu! They who are lost to me

LXXXII.

What are thy sorrows, O my native Earth,
 Blest with the sun, the dew, the clouds, the rains—
 Blest with the songs of birds, and ceaseless mirth
 Of brooklets, coursing through thy verdant plains?
 What are thy trifling, momentary pains
 To these that make a sport and prey of me?
 Thy tears sink in thy bosom, which retains
 The good when made of all its evil free;
 But hell collects the bad, a scavenger to thee.

LXXXIII.

Thou hast a sky above thee—heaven—all
 Its raptures promised to thy willing sons;
 Hope smiles beyond; Faith strengthens when they fall,
 And Love's pure spring perennially runs
 To bless the lonely widow's little ones.
 But what is here that does not come to light
 The wishes of Hell's hopeless myrmidons,
 And throw upon the most engaging light
 The misty veil of tears or Wee's eternal night?

LXXXIV.

Farewell, O Earth! upon thy happy ear
 My lingering wail shall fall from mortal tongue:
 Behold, I send to thee my messenger,
 Who shall recount the doleful tale ere long.
 Go, then, my friend of other days—the song
 Of revelry must change to weeping, go,
 While yet the eye is bright, the pulses strong,
 And light, though dim, gleams o'er this vale of wee,
 Mount to thy home above, and leave me here below.

LXXXV.

"But ere I say 'Farewell' to thee, I long
 To tell my doleful history; but know,
 'Tis not the story of my sin and wrong,
 But this unutterable load of woe.
 I will not own that I have made it so;
 I will not charge it to my company.
 I need not in the face of Heaven throw
 The sweeping charge, the hell-insulting lie,
 That by a fixed decree I could but sin and die.

LXXXVI.

"'Twas not blind Chance, nor I, nor God, nor Fate,
 Nor Hell, nor my associates, nor Crime,
 Each acting singly—all confederate
 Placed me upon their gaming-table, Time.
 All strove to win; I careless spent my prime,
 Esteeming one possessor as the rest,
 A master; dancing to the merry chime
 Of the musicians, naught I cared; I prest
 The question how to pass my idle hours the best.

LXXXVII.

"Hell won at last, and claimed its waiting prize—
 Ah! little of its value then I knew!—
 And to the blooming earth and sunny skies
 I bade a long, a sorrowful 'Adieu!'
 My winner bound me fast in chains, and drew
 Me down to this immeasurable deep;
 Around me came the howling, hissing crew,
 And o'er the thoughts that fain would go to sleep
 Throughout immortal years their hellish orgies keep.

LXXXVIII.

“I would—but ah! I cannot—here, within,
 There is a deeper ocean than beneath,
 Where writhe the wretched memories of sin;
 And when I would resume my tale, the breath
 Must go to fan the flames of endless death;
 And when one sorrow seems præminent,
 A thousand others weave a thorny wreath
 Around my burning brain, whose vain intent
 Is waiting still to find when Vengeance will relent.

LXXXIX.

“But O there lies in Memory’s field a waste
 Which once was green and beautiful to see.
 What lines of beauty!—would they were effaced!
 I then behold in innocence and glee
 The child is climbing to his father’s knee,
 To hear him tell of ghosts. And O how fair
 My mother’s face! How sweet the lullaby
 That rises heavenward on the evening air!
 O Earth, thy mothers’ songs have angel listeners there!

XC.

“And there are playmates—happy youthful friends
 And loves; but all is over now. The dream
 Of glory on the dawn of morning ends;
 The play is over when the vernal gleam
 Of April sunset gives its richest beam
 To paint the golden clouds! The day is o’er;
 The night has fallen on the sparkling stream;
 And all its gems are rayless, though they wore
 The robe of fadeless beauty but an hour before.

XCI.

"The gleeful children sporting round the fire
 Have wearied of their childish games; the tale
 Of horrid goblin, told them by the sire,
 Has awed them into silence. Now the wail
 Of bird ill-omened trembles in the vale.
 Beneath the cover they their heads conceal,
 But cannot sleep; they start with terror pale,
 And cry, 'O mother, ghosts around us steal!'
 Their father bids them sleep, and safe again they feel.

XCII.

"The youthful friends are severed, though the pledge
 Was made to strengthen with eternity;
 But Hate has cut the bonds, and bears an edge
 The keener now, since, once an enemy,
 The worst of all an injured friend must be.
 Young Hope is caged; her wings are useless now.
 In vain the captive struggles to be free;
 The eyes no longer with high ardor glow;
 The voice now only serves to utter notes of woe.

XCIII.

"The loves—those gleams of sunshine through the
 clouds!—
 Bright halcyon days!—I will no more of these
 Delusive visions of a mind which crowds
 The present with its graveless memories.
 Hence I shall look no more beyond those seas—
 Here is my home; then let me here pursue,
 If not the *fatuus* lights of love and ease.
 At least what never may the past renew.
 O Earth! thy hopeless child cries back to thee, Adieu!

XCIV.

“And thou art parting now, a messenger
 From darkness into light; and wilt thou say
 To anxious friends of earth that I am here?
 But no; I have no friends—a moment, stay!
 What ties have I with beings made of clay?
 Do I upon the tears of such depend?
 Away such thoughts! such childishness, away!
 Spirit, I have a life that cannot end;
 Then, why bewail my lot, or long to have a friend?

XCV.

“Yet round that name I linger, though the sweet
 Is gone, and left the bitter. Friend, farewell!
 Again, a last time, I the word repeat.
 And on its agonizing cadence dwell.
 Go, trembling mortal! quit the courts of hell!
 Spread thy light pinions o’er the boiling sea,
 And every baleful influence repel
 With faith and hope; and, when from danger free,
 Embrace fair Love again—and O remember me!”

XCVI.

Thus spoke the spirit; in a moment more
 He vanished into darkness. All alone
 Stood Azan, musing on the dreary shore;
 And, listening to the surge’s hollow moan,
 He longed to know to what retreat had flown
 The guide through all his wanderings; but he
 Left not a trace behind. A smothered groan,
 As from the dark recesses of the sea,
 Seemed now to answer every thought, “Remember me!”

XCVII.

"Remember me!" mused Azan. "Where art thou
 That callest to me with this sad refrain?
 What good does my remembrance do thee now,
 That dost not answer to my call again?
 Here left alone in the forlorn domain,
 Who promised me a tear in Memory's urn?
 Whose love-drops mingle with bright heaven's rain?
 Whose sighs for me, upon the breezes borne,
 Bear heavenward the prayer that I may safe return?

XCVIII.

"Am I immortal? Do my tears avail
 For spirits shed? Is this poor clay above
 The soul? And must the house bewail
 The wretched outcast pleading for its love?
 Remember me, poor house, when I remove
 To find a dwelling in another clime!
 Remember me, wherever I may rove,
 Ye squalid brood of dust, and mold, and slime,
 And think whose tenement this was in olden time!

XCIX.

"Remember thee? Lost spirit, who am I?
 A wanderer cast upon a friendless shore—
 A helpless child of poor Mortality,
 That never trod these dismal shades before.
 Then, fare thee well! I may not answer more;
 Another task I must at once essay:
 I will, above this sea of sorrow, soar
 To yon Elysian fields of joy and day.
 Then, spirit, fare thee well, I most sincerely pray!"

C.

Thus saying, Azan spread his wings again
 Toward the land of Faith, and Hope, and Love,
 Which scarcely had he done ere o'er the main
 Dark adverse tempests burst, and backward drove
 His feeble wings. Around, beneath, above,
 Incessant lightnings played; his senses reeled;
 And, as against the winds he vainly strove,
 The shining forms of Faith and Love, concealed,
 Left Hope alone, whose form but dimly was revealed.

CI.

He thought, perhaps, that e'en this hopeful beam
 Was but the child of overwrought desire;
 Or else, perhaps, some faint and struggling gleam
 Of lightning playing o'er the sea of fire;
 But while he thus revolved, a monster dire,
 With fearful roar, sprang upward from the wave,
 And seized him fast; then dashed the billows higher,
 While Azan, though his heart was stout and brave,
 Despaired of all but Heaven to intervene and save.

CII.

O Adam, there were Love, and Hope, and Faith
 Left, when thy Cain his younger brother slew!
 While gazing on the pallid face of Death
 With her that bore him, ye unhappy two
 Knew that the mantle which o'er him ye threw
 Was but the web, whose warp and woof ye spun
 When first ye did what God forbade to do.
 Deep was the grief ye felt for the lost son;
 But Faith, and Hope, and Love brought you another one.

CIII.

But where might Azan turn, of Hope bereft,
 To Love a stranger, and of Faith denied?
 He stood not at the gate of Eden left,
 With his companion clinging to his side,
 To share with him whatever might betide.
 Despair alone could give him energy,
 As he was struggling in an ocean wide.
 Ah! ye had woes enough; but what had he,
 Alone and grappling with the monsters and the sea?

CIV.

'T were long to tell of all his toils; but he
 At last upon the shore in safety stood;
 But, wingless now, he most incautiously
 Turned round to look. A moment more the flood
 Came rolling back upon him. He renewed
 His efforts to escape; but, everywhere
 Along that beach, the fiery waves pursued,
 And cliffs, whose tops were lost in upper air,
 Hung o'er him like the walls of pitiless despair.

CV.

Vain speed was his; nearer and nearer drew
 The seething billows of the fiery sea;
 Yet on and on, for leagues and leagues, he flew,
 With fiends unnumbered following eagerly.
 Anon he heard a voice, "Remember me!"
 And well he comprehended its despair.
 The spirit was pursuing him, and he
 Had never entertained his parting prayer
 Till now, when hell was almost glowing in his hair.

CVI.

At last he fell, exhausted, and his eye
 Turned wistful upward to the frowning height,
 And faintly in the distance did desery
 The glimmer of a calm and hopeful light.
 'Twas dim indeed, but 't was a glorious sight!
 And on the margin of the roaring sea,
 Surrounded by the howling fiends of Night,
 He gazed again, and saw the sisters, three;
 And as he closed his eyes, he sighed, "Remember me!"

CVII.

There was a lapse in consciousness; but when
 Again he felt and saw, three angels bent
 O'er him, and bade him rise and live again.
 No groans, nor yells, nor bitter curses, blent
 With their sweet voices. O'er the steep ascent
 Their hands unfelt had borne him. Now their song
 Rang out in notes of sweetest ravishment;
 And that which came from each celestial tongue
 Celestial air caught up and echoed loud and long.

CVIII.

The sun was rising—not a cloud was there
 His rays of royal splendor to obscure;
 There was a fragrance in the morning air—
 Which those can never feel who ne'er endure
 The loathsome stench of prison-house impure;
 But when the captive from his gloomy cell
 Steps forth to light, though friendless now, he sure
 Would not the boon for gold of Ophir sell—
 The pure, free air of heaven, unbought, unsalable!

CIX.

Earth, thou art lovely! yes, with all thy ill,
 Thou art a lovely orb to look upon!
 And often have I climbed some towering hill
 To gaze upon thy beauties all alone;
 To catch the latest glimmer of the sun;
 To build my castles in the clouds of even;
 To watch the moon and fair Endymion
 Sport o'er the misty mountains, and be given
 The promise of perpetual love and youth in heaven.

CX.

With all thy crying wickedness; with all
 Thy fields which War has dyed incarnadine;
 With all the disappointments that befall,
 And blast the dearest hope and best design;
 With all the miseries with which I pine,
 And all the passions which within me burn—
 I love thee, Earth, birth-place of all, and mine!
 And, absent from thy fond embrace, I yearn
 To leave all else behind, and to thy lap return.

CXI.

'Tis not the pris'ner only, who for years
 Has filled a living grave, sings jubilee,
 And, for the tears of sorrow, sheds the tears
 Of thankfulness, that he again is free:
 He who has toiled for years by land and sea
 May shout to see the hills where boyhood's days
 Were passed in wild exuberance of glee;
 Though old, he plays the boy again, and lays
 His head upon the turf 'neath evening's parting rays.

CXII.

The soldier, who in distant lands has warred,
 Returning, sees the curling smoke ascend.
 He weeps; why should he weep, the battle-scarred?
 Ah! there is home! and there his hardships end;
 And in that home there's more than wife, or friend,
 Or child. Above him glow the same blue skies
 On which a boy he gazed and saw them bend
 Benignant, and before his wondering eyes
 The stars shone out as lamps from the new paradise.

CXIII.

Ay, too, methinks the angels love to view
 The virgin bowers, where smiles the rosy morn;
 And sainted spirits walk at evening through
 The moonlit meadows, where the owl forlorn
 Hoots to his mate, on noiseless pinions borne
 To distant dells, or where the limpid stream
 Flows gently on through fields of golden corn;
 There meditative let them sit and dream
 Of days that brighter grow thro' day's declining beam.

CXIV.

And I have thought that e'en the Thunderer
 Did not disdain to fill an earthly throne,
 When from the lofty mountain peaks, or where
 The fire and hail along his path were sown,
 He launched his blazing bolts of thunder down.
 Ay, doth he not at eventide, e'en now,
 As when in Eden sorrow was unknown,
 Lay off the diadem, and bare his brow
 To those sweet zephyrs which across the meadows blow?

CXV.

Then welcome, Azan, to the earth again!

'Tis worthy of thy greeting and my song;

'Tis worthy of a more exalted strain

Than ever swept these feeble chords along;

'Tis worthy of an angel's flaming tongue;

And they did chant in chorus when the train

Of bright creation into being sprung;

And by the lowly manger they again

In Prince Immanuel's praise awoke the glorious strain.

CXVI.

And there is coming, with the flight of time,

A day of wonders, such as ne'er before

Resounded with the symphony sublime.

Then every harp in heaven, from the poor

Blind beggar minstrel's to the mighty roar

Of archangelic trumpet, will the note,

Proclaiming peace on earth for evermore,

O'er vales and mountains, land and ocean, float;

And loud reverberate through ages most remote.

CXVII.

But I will sing no more of thee. I know

No language only that I learned of thee.

I have prolonged some notes of joy and woe

Until they echoed o'er the shadowy sea,

Which we have learned to call the Yet-to-be,

From whose ungainly images I start,

Yet, charmed, invoke again their company—

Conjuring them to teach to me their art,

And chant their dismal songs, to soothe my aching heart.

CXVIII.

O land of shadows, long deserted quite
 By all the shining, hope-inspiring train!
 Back to thy cells of everlasting night
 Receive the dying echoes of my strain;
 They with the spirits of the past remain—
 Repository of the rusty arms
 And faded crowns of owners quite as vain;
 They boasted for awhile their empty charms,
 But from the day of glory sank in night and storms.

CXIX.

How thou dost preach! yet mortals shut their ears;
 For thou hast not a flattering tongue; and they
 Will not admit the truth that wakes their fears,
 And tells them they are creatures of a day.
 Yet hast thou nothing cheering for us? Say
 If unexhausted riches do not lie
 Within thy bosom, which, when brought away,
 Shall gleam in fadeless diadems on high?
 Yes, thou hast treasures which this world can never buy.

CXX.

Thou hast the patriot's guerdon, and the goad
 To spur the sluggard to activity;
 The brighter crown the heavier the load
 The pilgrim bears across life's wastes to thee,
 Regardless what its character may be.
 Th' ambitious packs the wreck of broken schemes
 Through halting age, thy zealous votary;
 The spurned and jilted maiden weeps, and dreams,
 And prays, and hopes to smile again beneath thy beams.

CXXI.

The sluggard turns himself upon his side,
 And sees in thy domain a softer bed;
 The broken-hearted, long of joy denied,
 Knows all will heal again when he is dead;
 The child e'en sees the phantom that has sped
 Before his opening eyes on fairy wings;
 In wild delirium then it turns its head
 And burning heart from perishable things,
 To bathe its parching lips in thy perennial springs.

CXXII.

Hail, then, thou world of shadows! on thy verge,
 With Azan, let me stand and gaze, until
 The rising stars of Faith and Hope emerge,
 To join with Love's, o'er Zion's crested hill.
 Then Death upon my members, cold and chill,
 May lay his hand. One look upon the past,
 And one adieu to earth—delightful still,
 But paling in the distance—I will cast
 My vessel on thy waves, secure of rest at last.

CXXIII.

Azan was thrilled with the delightful song;
 And when it died away he turned to see
 If yet the minstrels would the note prolong;
 But now, with words of counsel, Charity
 Began: "Ere now to life thou summoned be,
 Remember what has saved thee from the tomb,
 And know that there are many who to thee
 Will look for help in sorrow, and to whom
 'T will be thy duty to attend in days to come

CXXIV.

“Discard forever ease and levity.

Thy happiness shall be in labor. Bliss,
By idleness, will change to misery.

Haste not in friendly deeds; for oft amiss
One seals a friend’s destruction with a kiss.
Load none with thy caresses, lest they feel

A burden in thy love. The world may hiss
Thy efforts to enhance their earthly weal;
Yet from the meanest wretch turn not upon thy heel.

CXXV.

“Show to the world a soul by smiles unbought,
By frowns unawed, by sorrow unalloyed,
Unwarped by passion, ne’er by falsehood caught,
Forever in the cause of man employed,
But seeking not his smiles to be enjoyed;
Free as the rain thy tears of sympathy,
Free as the air, of self-importance void,
Thy words of counsel; and, as Deity
Blesses before we ask, let thy good deeds be free.”

CXXVI.

“Arise,” said Hope, “and look to heaven above.
Thither direct thy steps, and never fear.
When all thy friends desert, and human love
May not afford one sympathetic tear,
Then look aloft; there is a smile of cheer
Will struggle through the blackest clouds that roll
Across the sky of earth. When foes are near,
And lay their snares to catch thy fainting soul,
Let Hope sustain thee still, and guide thee to the goal.”

CXXVII.

"When hungry and desponding," whispered Faith,
 "Believe, and thou shalt never fail of bread.
 Faith will enable thee to conquer Death,
 And set thy foot upon his crownless head.
 Think oft of her that healed, and her that led
 Through woe and fear; and then remember me,
 The one that has defended, saved, and fed."
 "Be loving, cheerful, true!" exclaimed the three;
 "Go, wipe away the stain upon the dead and thee!"

CXXVIII.

They rose to heaven. Then Azan woke. 'T was all
 A strange, wild dream—a vision of the night.
 He lay within his patrimonial hall,
 While on his half-closed eyes a fading light
 Of an expiring lamp anon shone bright,
 Then died away in darkness. "Hence," said he,
 "All pleasure, save the one of doing right!
 Henceforth there is no other life for me
 Than one of toil to shame my former levity."

CXXIX.

He lived to prove his heart's sincerity;
 He drove the pleasure-loving from his hall;
 No more the sound of reckless revelry
 Was heard within the patrimonial wall.
 But leaves, though green, before the winter fall,
 Though not before the golden fruit appears;
 So Azan fell, but left behind to all
 The holy deeds of many pious years
 With those who wept his loss with no unwilling tears.

CXXX.

He fell—and there was none behind to claim
 The home his father left to him; and we
 Muse in its silent halls. 'Tis said there came
 The *genii* of the mountain height to see
 Him on his dying-bed. The heavenly three
 The old deserted mansion hover o'er;
 Nightly its halls are lighted brilliantly,
 And troops of spirits, from a distant shore,
 Trip o'er the silver lake, and gather round the door.

CXXXI.

Long-robed and grave, he leads the happy band,
 While gems of priceless value deck his crown,
 And Love, the brightest angel of that land,
 Has made him partner of her stainless throne.
 The names of Faith and Hope are there unknown,
 Though they are known by other names in heaven;
 For of the shining triad there's not one
 Can lose immortal essence—brighter even [given.
 Beyond the flood than here, they walk with souls for-

CXXXII.

No more! my lamp is out—my oil is spent—
 I trim the wick in vain; my stand of ink
 Is all exhausted, save the sediment;
 I hurl it in the fire; I sit and think
 Of Azan roving on the arid brink
 Of that infernal ocean. There are woes
 Whose cups of anguish mortals cannot drink.
 But hold! This long and weary tale I close,
 And shut my eyes in sleep. Thank God for such repose!

CXXXIII.

But ere I go, I gaze into the fire,
 And of a thousand flitting fancies dream.
 I see from that discarded stand aspire
 A wreathing circle of escaping steam.
 I thence, though uninspired, retouch my theme,
 To draw one sketch in pen and ink again;
 And from the taper's last expiring gleam
 Add one more isle to Fancy's weird domain,
 Ere Night o'er all resume her dull, oblivious reign.

CXXXIV.

What is poor human nature but the ink
 In earthen vessels bottled, and the pen
 Man's changeful will, the near connecting-link
 With Deity, who writes his name by men?
 What is the earth but paper? and what then
 The whole of life but lore we cannot read,
 Though instruments of writing it? and when
 The ink's exhausted, and the lamp is dead,
 The stand is thrown away—the empty human head.

CXXXV.

Yet from the seething sediment arise
 Bright vapors that in beauty far surpass
 These feeble touches of the pen, that lies
 Now worthless, rust-decayed, and worn, alas!
 With all the shapeless and decaying mass
 Of writings that remain on earth. The air
 Bears on its balmy wing the cloud that has
 Its birth amid the castaways of Care,
 And o'er the sunset floats like angel's golden hair.

CXXXVI.

Thus, Azan, I behold thee. Be it true,
 Or but a dream of fancy, it is o'er.
 To thee, reluctantly, I bid adieu.
 Long have I lingered on this gloomy shore,
 To me a place of contemplation more
 Than one of horror; but the dearest ties
 Must all be sundered. May thy spirit soar
 Like this thin vapor which I see arise,
 And find a home at last in Eden's sunny skies!





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